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02

Artists & ILLUSTRATORS

IMPROVING YOUR ART WITH EVERY ISSUE

THE BRITISH ART PRIZE

THE PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD

WINNER REVEALED INSIDE!

Face value

Portraits in oil and charcoal

Painting places

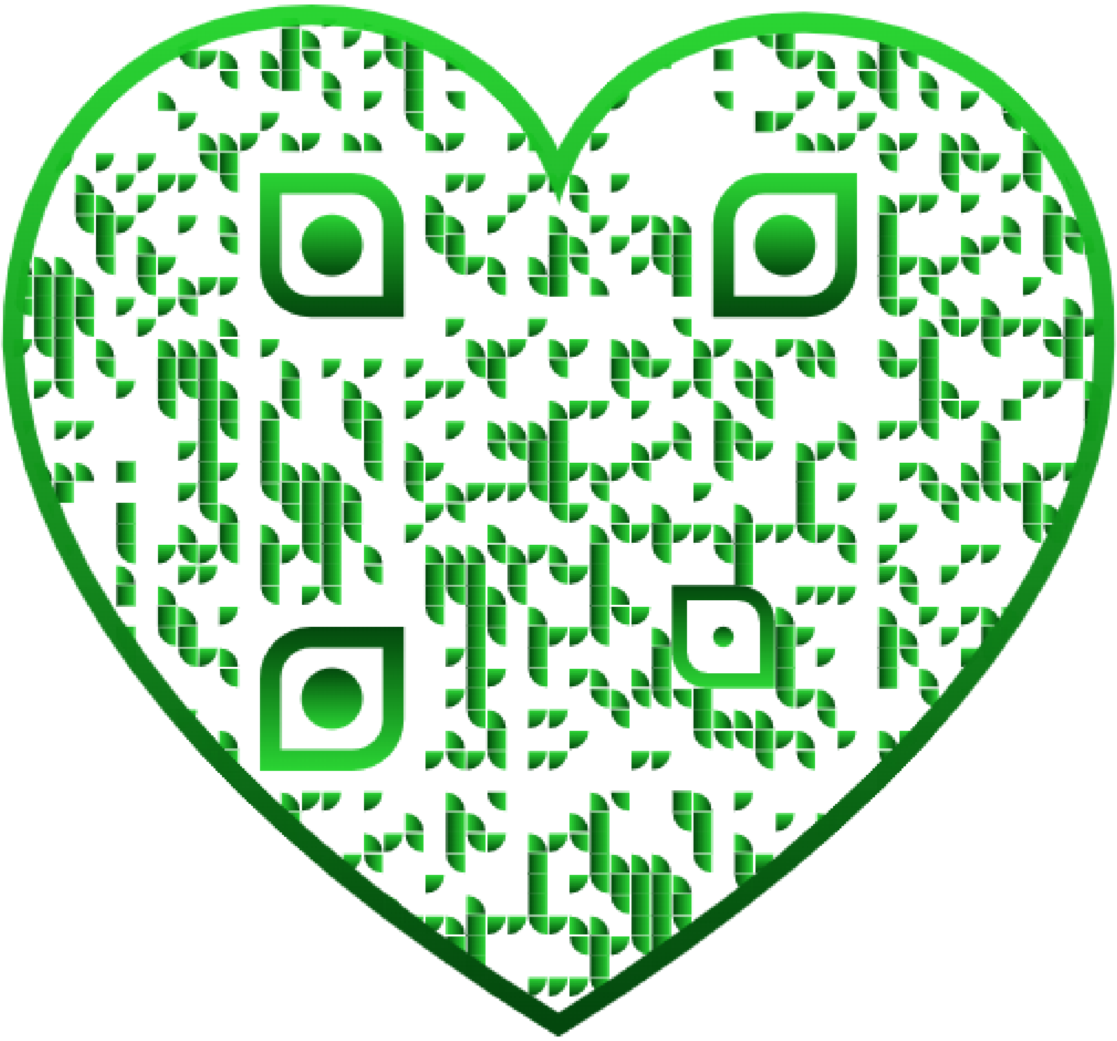
In mixed media

All about animals

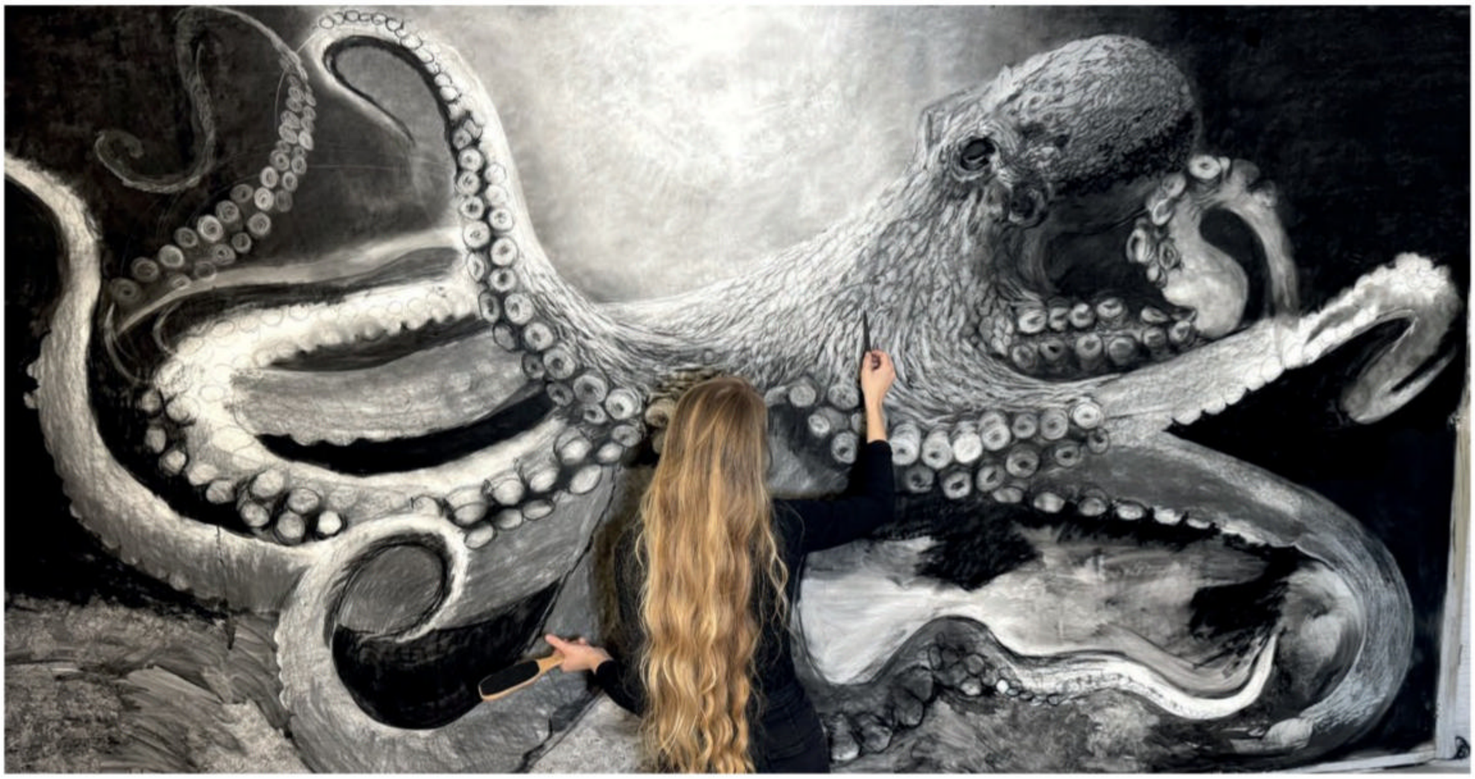
Practical tips and techniques

Pablo Picasso

On printmaking



DRAWING FOR creativeworld



Octopus by Zuzanna Salamon Nitram Charcoal & Nitram Aquarelle on Lenox 100 by Legion Paper

WITH NITRAM CHARCOAL

"I am thrilled to be working on a 3.5-meter drawing that will be exhibited at the Nitram booth at CreativeWorld in Frankfurt, Germany. I couldn't imagine tackling this project without Nitram products, especially Nitram Aquarelle, which has quickly become my favourite. It allows me to efficiently cover large areas of the drawing and work dynamically, making the process even more exciting. Nitram Aquarelle is ideal for creating a flawless surface that I can layer with additional charcoal, and it's versatile enough to be used for fine details with a small brush. It lets me achieve a full grayscale range, from deep blacks to delicate light washes, helping me bring to life this dramatic image of the octopus resting in the depths of the ocean."

~ Zuzanna Salamon

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To watch a video of Zuzanna Salamon working on this drawing, please visit:
https://nitramcharcoal.com/zsalamon or scan the QR code

Zuzanna Salamon is a Fine Art artist based in Edinburgh specializing in large-scale charcoal drawings. Her works focus on the exploration of the interplay between light and shadow and revealing the inherent poetry within the human form. Zuzanna exhibited in many international group exhibitions including the Royal Academy of Arts, the Royal Society of British Artists, and the Royal Scottish Academy. In 2024 she was awarded the de Laszlo Medal for Excellence. **@zuzanna_salamon | www.zsalamon.com**

www.nitramcharcoal.com

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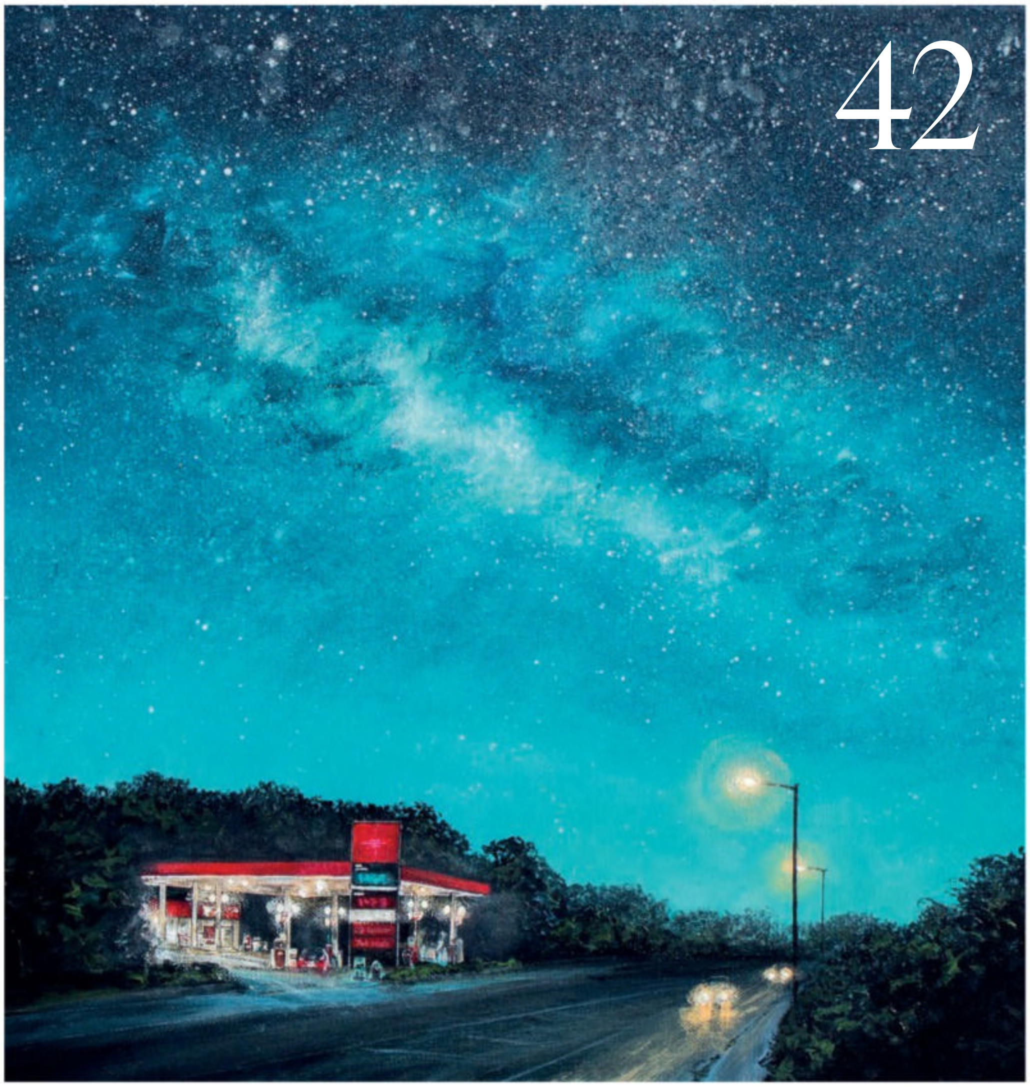

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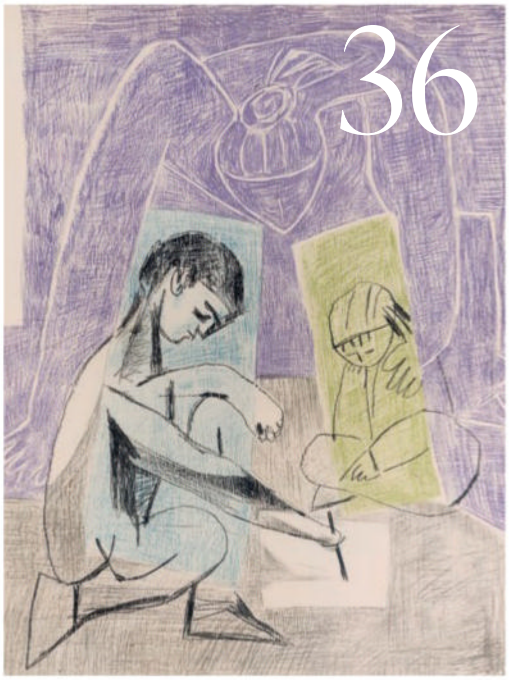

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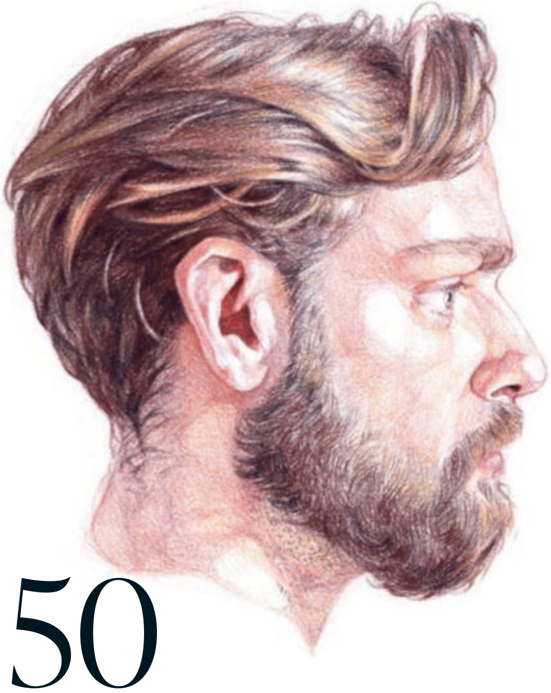

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Pablo Picasso...

... is listed in the Guinness World Records as the most prolific painter who ever lived, producing 13,500 paintings and designs, 2000 prints and engravings, and 300 sculptures and ceramics in his lifetime. So, although we're very familiar with some of his better-known works, it shouldn't come as a surprise that there's still a lot we haven't seen. Which is why a new exhibition, *Picasso Printmaker*, at the British Museum is such a treat as over 100 much lesser-known prints will be on display. To see and read more, and for the chance to bag one of the 25 pairs of tickets we're giving away, go to page 36.

For challenges to try at home, why not follow Sema Martin's step-by-step on drawing a polar bear in coloured pencil and pastel, or Jane Davies' barn owl in watercolour. Completing his series on how to draw different parts of the head, Jake Spicer shows you how to master hair whilst we also have a serene coastal scene in watercolour and a cityscape in Posca pens for you to try your hand at.

If it's portrait inspiration you're after, check out this month's The Big Interview, where our cover star Jie Gao explains why he likes painting older folk whilst the subject of In The Studio, Mike Skinner, shares his thoughts on working in mixed media, why he never uses an easel and the perils of bad framing.

For a truly heartwarming read, go to the interview with this year's British Art Prize People's Choice winner, Diane Griffiths. Her painting, *Driving Home*, got voted for in the thousands, not least because her Cornish community came together to support her after she appeared on the radio to drum up just that. Proof once more of the power of art to connect and inspire.

Niki Browes Editor

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INTRODUCING

DIANE GRIFFITHS
Self-taught, The People's Choice winner works part-time as an artist and has artwork on display in Cornish galleries, shops and online. Working in a mixed media of acrylic, oil and enamel, she enjoys playing with colour and texture and is inspired by life, memory and imagination.

JIE GAO
Our cover artist, who is also an art director for a gaming company, enjoys portrait painting in oil and charcoal, and is always fascinated by capturing the unique moments of beauty in ordinary people. Expressive, animated faces consistently ignite his strong desire for artistic expression.

JANE DAVIES
Jane is a self-taught watercolour artist who runs her art business painting commissions and teaching both in person and online with Skillshare. Jane has been a finalist in the David Shepherd Artist of the Year competition, receiving the highly commended recognition for one painting.

ROSEANNA CHETWOOD
After earning a Fine Art degree from the Birmingham Institute of Art and Design, Roseanna combined her passions for sculpture and painting through palette knife techniques. Her distinctive style uses a sculptural surface of thick oil paint to depict distinctive pet portraits.

THIS MONTH'S COVER BY JIE GAO

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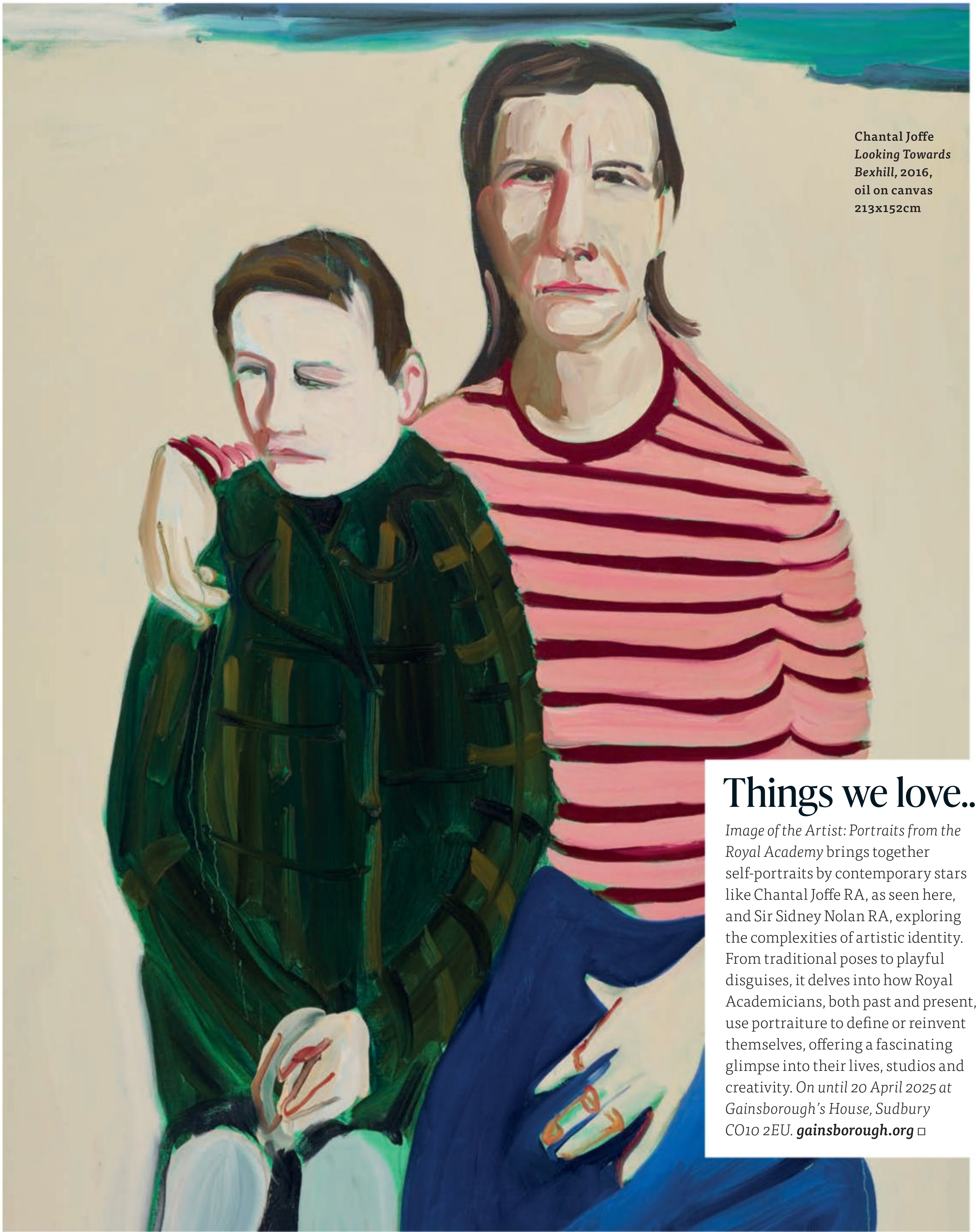
Sketchbook

TIPS • ADVICE • EXHIBITIONS • NEWS • REVIEWS

EDITED BY RAMSHA VISTRO



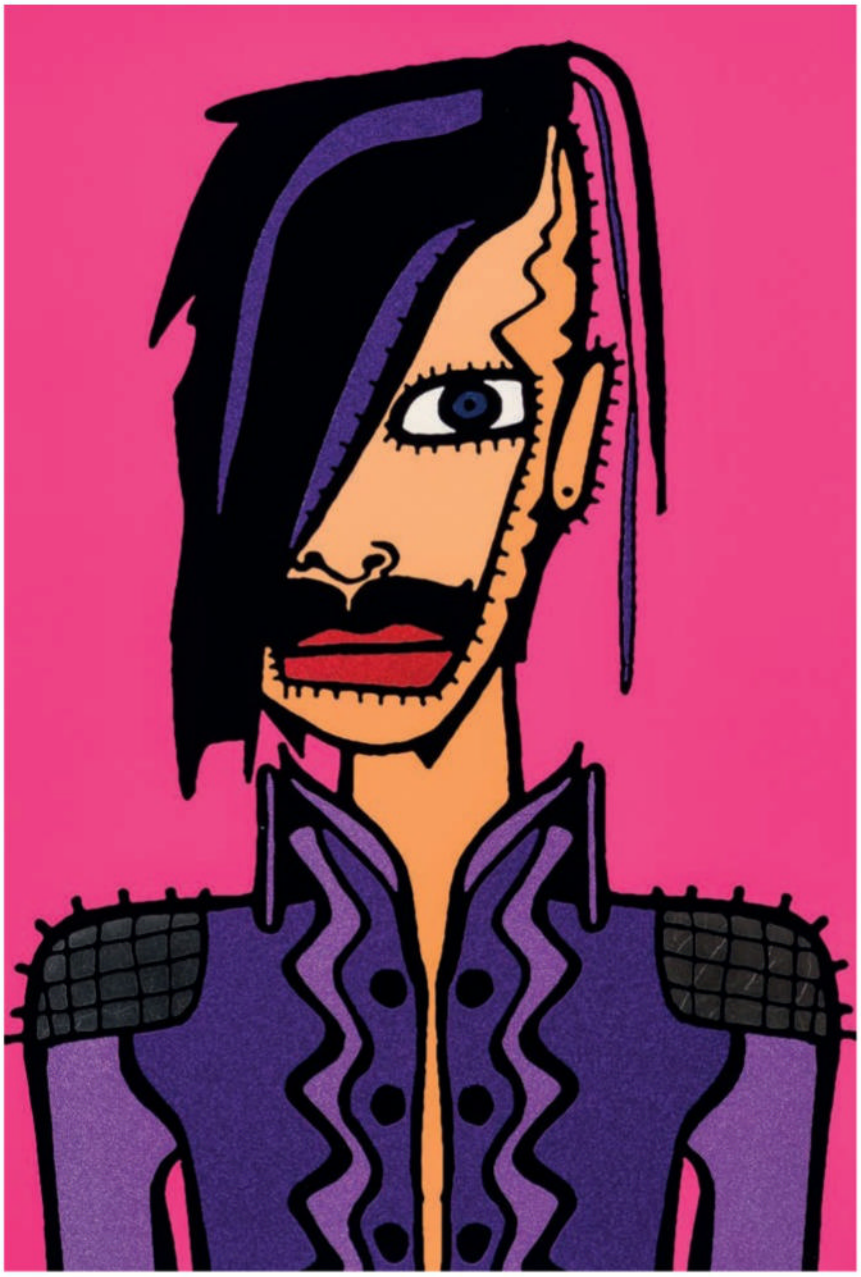
Chantal Joffe
***Looking Towards Bexhill*, 2016,**
oil on canvas
213x152cm

© CHANTAL JOFFE, COURTESY THE ARTIST AND VICTORIA MIRO

Things we love...

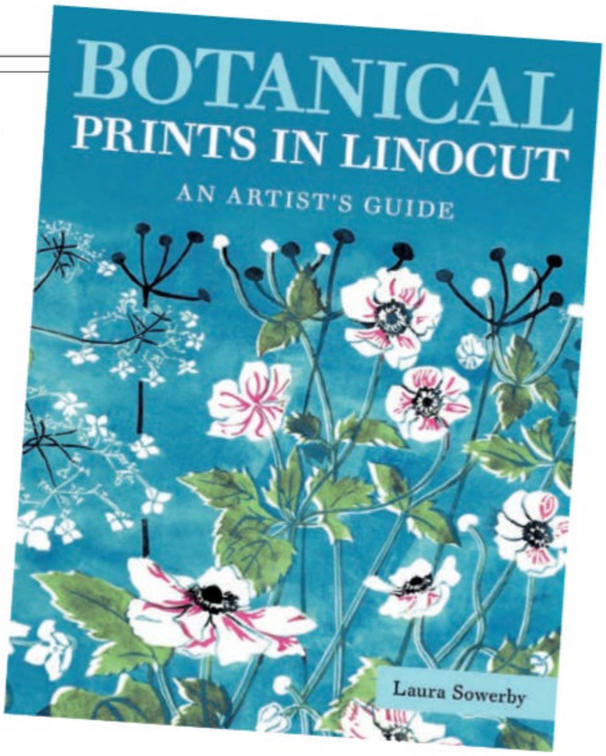
Image of the Artist: Portraits from the Royal Academy brings together self-portraits by contemporary stars like Chantal Joffe RA, as seen here, and Sir Sidney Nolan RA, exploring the complexities of artistic identity. From traditional poses to playful disguises, it delves into how Royal Academicians, both past and present, use portraiture to define or reinvent themselves, offering a fascinating glimpse into their lives, studios and creativity. *On until 20 April 2025 at Gainsborough's House, Sudbury CO10 2EU.* ***gainsborough.org*** □

© BOY GEORGE, 'PURPLE REIGN' 2024. IMAGE COURTESY OF DAVID PARRY/PA MEDIA ASSIGNMENTS



Don't miss...

Boy George's electrifying debut art collection, *Fame*. Presented with Castle Fine Art, it features limited-edition portraits of icons like David Bowie, Madonna and Prince, alongside his self-portrait from the Culture Club era. Blending neo-expressionism with a punk DIY aesthetic, Boy George's vivid, maximalist style celebrates individuality and creativity. Each silkscreen portrait explores fame's complexities, capturing its trailblazers with bold, offbeat materials. This collection is an unforgettable homage to music and art's enduring connection. ***castlefineart.com/uk***



BOOK OF THE MONTH

BOTANICAL PRINTS IN LINOCUT

Laura Sowerby

This practical guide is for lovers of plants, colour, design and print. Richly illustrated, it explains the full process of making a linocut, from sketch to finished print. It shows how to design with native hedgerow plants or lush garden favourites, whether for small intimate prints or impressive large-scale wallpaper. Written with the author's natural passion and illustrated with her beautiful work, this book is an inspiring guide for all printmakers whatever their experience or ambitions. ***The Crowood Press, £16.99***

Join us online!

There's an abundance of art inspiration amongst these pages. But if you're looking for more? Find it on the fabulous *Artists & Illustrators* website. It's one of the best digital resources for artists from every practise, whilst the refreshing redesign makes our practical guides, competitions and interviews even more insightful. See you there. ***artistsandillustrators.co.uk***

THE DIARY

Open calls, prizes and artist opportunities

21 JANUARY

Apply for the First Plinth: Public Art Award by this date. You could win £15,000 to create a large-scale sculpture. The entry fee starts from £22.50. ***sculptors.org.uk***

31 JANUARY

Enter The Homiens Art Prize for a chance to showcase your art in an online exhibition. Six winners will each receive $500. The entry free starts from $20. ***homiens.com***

10 FEBRUARY

Submit your artwork to the BBA Artist Prize 2025 in any medium for the chance to exhibit in Berlin. The total prize fund is €2,700 and entry fee is €35. ***bba-prizes.com***

24 FEBRUARY

Enter the Scottish Landscape Awards for a chance to win part of the £20,000 prize pool. Open to artists in Scotland over 16, working across all mediums. ***scottishartstrust.org***

DAVID SHEPHERD WILDLIFE FOUNDATION

WILDLIFE ARTIST OF THE YEAR 2025

ENTER THE WORLD'S GREATEST WILDLIFE ART COMPETITION!

Wildlife Artist of the Year 2025 is now open for entries. Whether you're a budding new painter, a professional wildlife artist, or a passionate artivist - it's time to make art that starts the conversation about conservation.

Our world needs wildlife and art more than ever, so whether you're picking up paintbrushes, pencils, or putting your mark on clay, wood, or metal, we'd love your art to be part of our 2025 competition.

Entry Period:

6 JANUARY to **27 MARCH 2025**

To find out more, scan the QR code below
or visit *bit.ly/WAY25*

Artwork by Danielle Verbeeten

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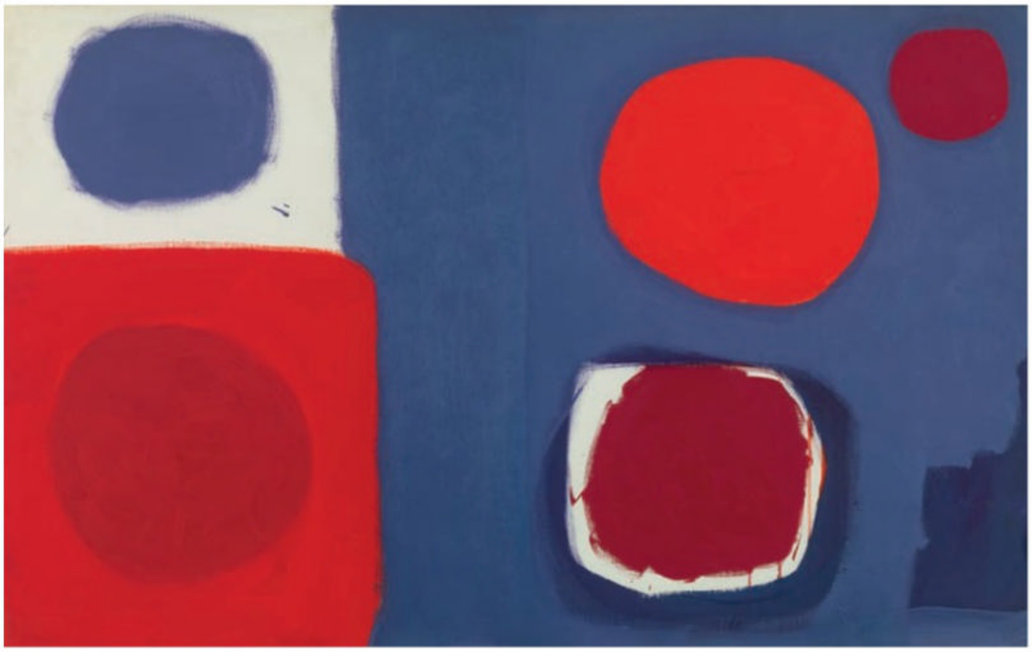
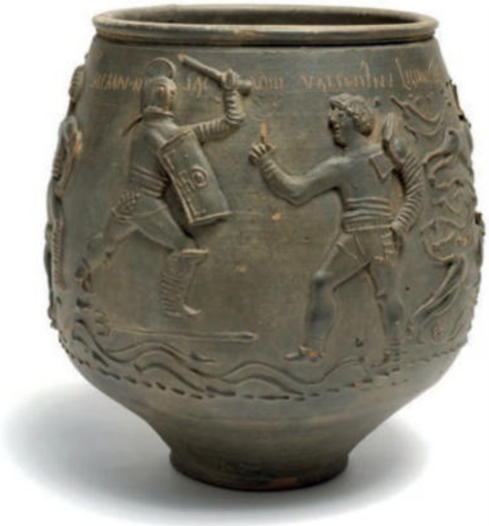


HERON, RED DISCS IN DUSKY BLUE SEPTEMBER 1962 (HIGH RES)

Be inspired...

by the trailblazing abstractions of Patrick Heron and Victor Pasmore. Their reimagined 1965 São Paulo Biennial exhibition showcases bold contrasts, asymmetry and expressive brushwork, offering a masterclass in balancing structure with intuition. Rejecting the Pop Art trends of their era, their distinctly European aesthetic celebrates movement and emotion, proving that abstraction thrives on individuality. Use their work as a reminder to challenge conventions and embrace the fluidity of form, letting your intuition lead as you experiment with texture, colour and composition in your own art.

hh-h.com



COLCHESTER VASE © COLCHESTER AND IPSWICH MUSEUM SERVICE, COLCHESTER COLLECTION

DISCOVER...

the fascinating world of Roman Britain with *Gladiators of Britain*, a touring British Museum Partnership exhibition. This immersive display uncovers the untold stories of gladiatorial combat across ancient Britain, showcasing key artefacts like the Colchester Vase, which depicts a real gladiator battle. By exploring the amphitheatres, cultural practices, and lives sacrificed for public spectacle, the exhibition explores the brutal spectacles of Roman Britain and their lasting impact on culture and society. Experience the rich archaeological finds that link Britain's past to the grandeur and violence of Roman rule. From 25 January to 11 May 2025 at Dorset Museum & Art Gallery, Dorchester DT1 1XA.

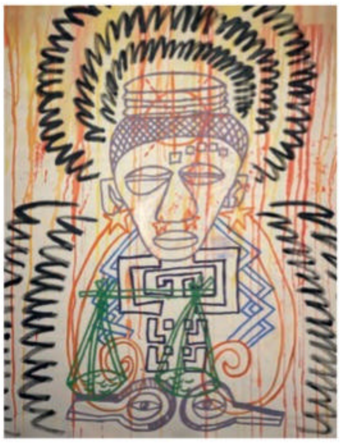
dorsetmuseum.org

EXPLORE

Osman Yousefzada's *When Will We Be Good Enough?* explores themes of power, labour and exploitation through striking sculptural installations. Drawing on his South Asian heritage and global colonial histories, Yousefzada highlights connections between colonial trade routes and today's digital networks, reflecting on enduring inequalities. The installation features a flotilla of boats, corporate busts symbolising modern power and items from museum collections, offering a compelling commentary on past and present systems of control. This thought-provoking work bridges historical narratives with urgent contemporary issues. On until 9 March 2025 at The Box, Plymouth PL4 8AX.

theboxplymouth.com

OSMAN YOUSEFZADA, CARTWRIGHT HALL ART GALLERY, PRESENTED BY BRADFORD 2025 UK CITY OF CULTURE. PHOTO: DAVID LINDSAY



RYAN HAWAII, THE WATER CARRIER, OIL ON CANVAS, 250X250CM

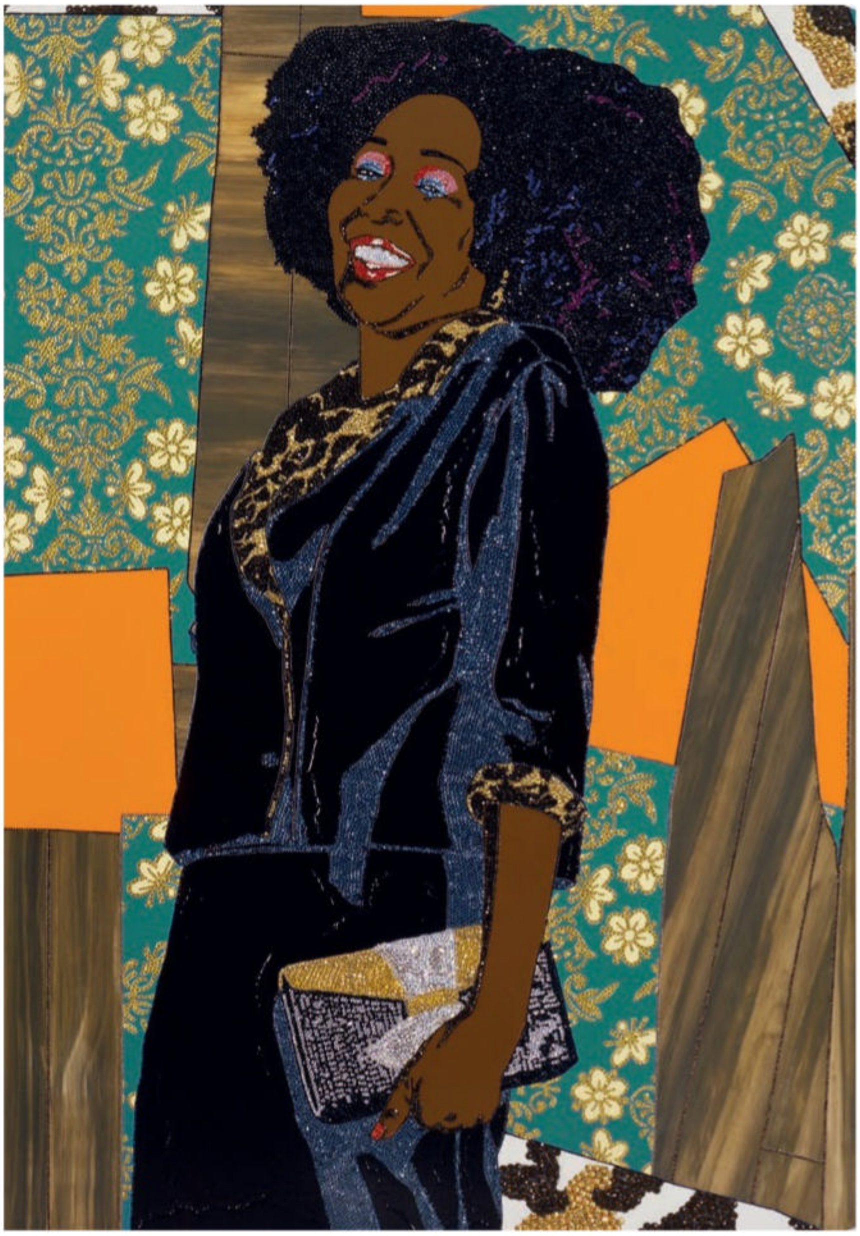
CREATIVE BOOST

Zooz, the new mushroom-enhanced drink, has launched Zooz Elevate, a programme supporting young and emerging artists and musicians. The initiative invites five painters and five musicians to the Zooz studio, offering creative space, bespoke materials, mindfulness opportunities, and nourishment. Selected participants whose work aligns with the brand may become ambassadors, with chances to showcase their art in London's West End. Their creations will also be featured on Zooz's social media and website, amplifying their unique, artistic voices.

zoozdrinks.com/artists

Exhibitions

THE BEST ART SHOWS TO VISIT FROM THIS MONTH ONWARDS



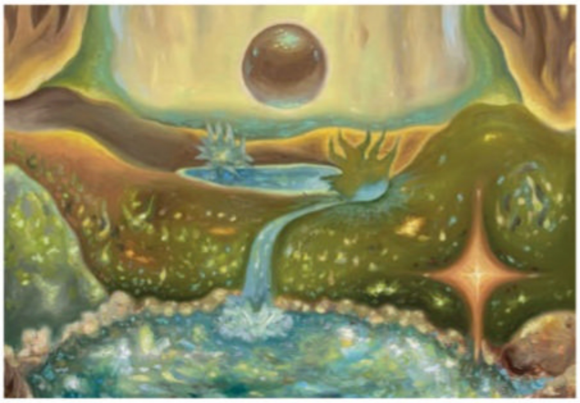
MICKALENE THOMAS, MAMA BUSH (YOUR LOVE KEEPS LIFTING ME) HIGHER AND HIGHER, 2009. © MICKALENE THOMAS

MICKALENE THOMAS: ALL ABOUT LOVE

11 February to 5 May 2025

This show is the artist's first UK solo exhibition, celebrating her vibrant portraits of Black women adorned with bold patterns and rhinestones. Spanning painting, collage, photography and installations, her work redefines beauty and identity while challenging societal norms. Highlights include grand mixed media portraits and immersive domestic settings inspired by her 1970s childhood. Drawing on Black feminist theory, Thomas' art celebrates love in all forms – self, family and romantic – reshaping contemporary portraiture with beauty, glamour and style.

Hayward Gallery, Southbank Centre, Belvedere Rd, London SE1 8XX. southbankcentre.co.uk



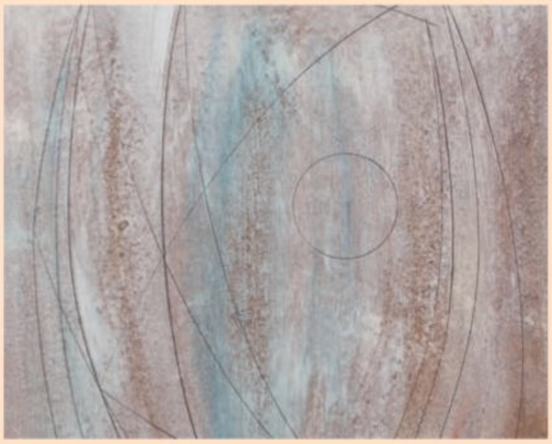
FUCHSIA, UNTITLED 2, 2024, ACRYLIC, INK AND OIL ON LINEN, 50X40CM. COURTESY OF KRISTIN HJELLEGJERDE GALLERY

DELICATE BEINGS

5 January to 8 February 2025

This immersive collection explores the interplay between good and evil, blending spiritual iconography with ecological themes. Through vibrant palettes and ethereal compositions, Fuchsia invites viewers to reflect on the balance between light, energy and life.

Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery, Old York Road, Wandsworth, London SW18 1TG. kristinhjellegjerde.com



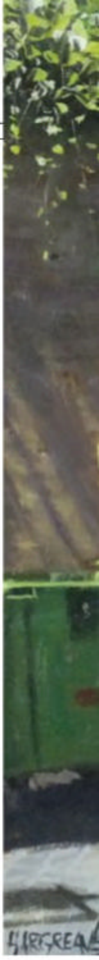
BARBARA HEPWORTH, DELPHI (STONE FORM)

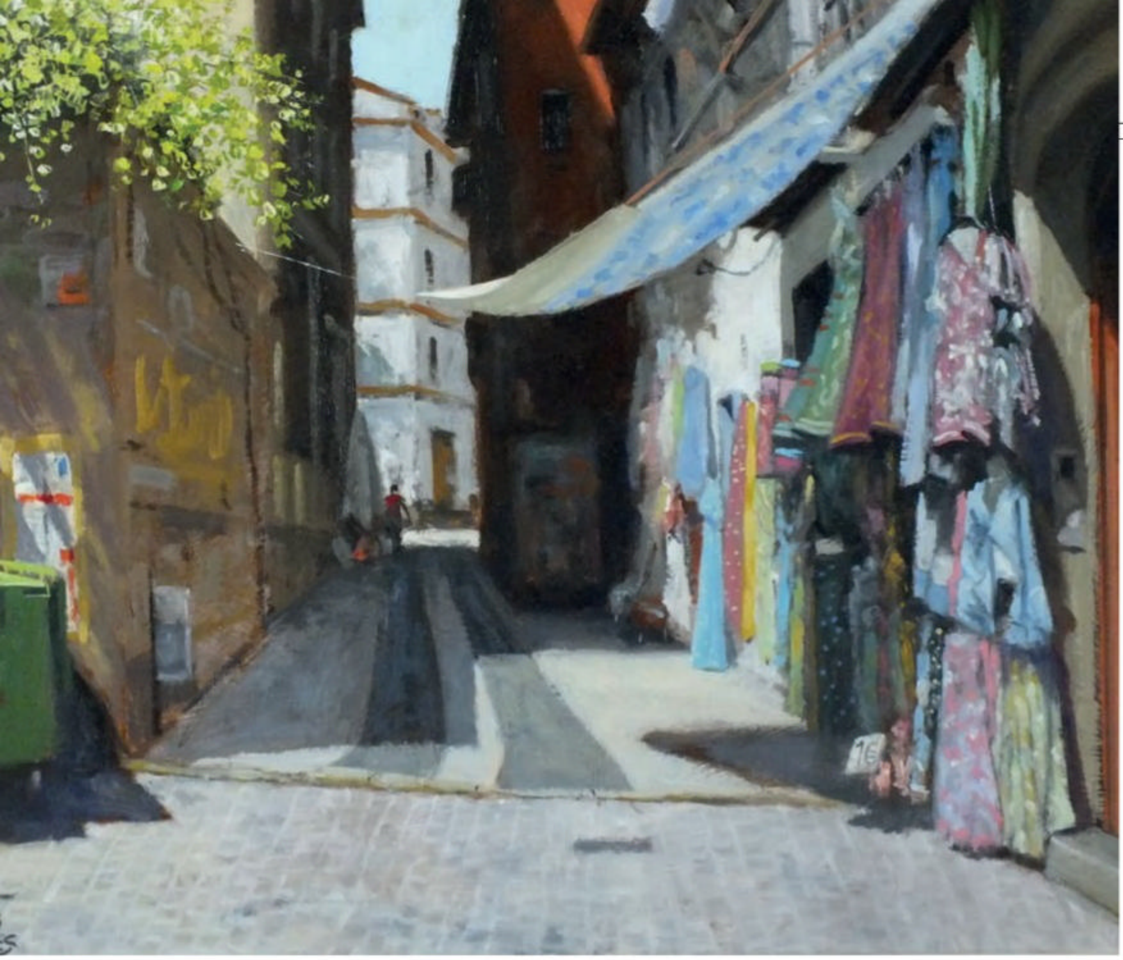
BARBARA HEPWORTH: STRINGS

6 February to 2 May 2025

This is a landmark exhibition celebrating one of the 20th century's greatest artists and sculptors, marking the 50th anniversary of her passing. Showcasing Hepworth's iconic stringed sculptures alongside rarely seen paintings and drawings, this show draws from public and private collections. Some works are on public view for the first time in decades, while others are debuting entirely.

Piano Nobile, London W11 4LW. piano-nobile.com





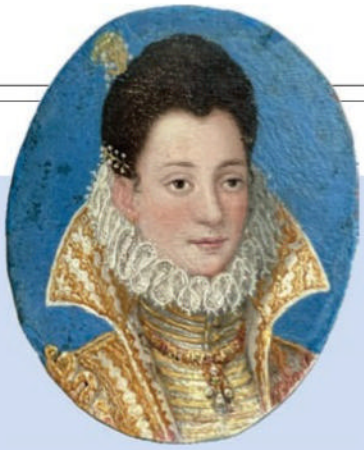
STREET CORNER-GRANADA COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

IAN HARGREAVES: MEDITERRANEAN LOVE AFFAIR

2 to 22 February 2025

This exhibition is artist Ian Hargreaves' second solo show with the gallery. It showcases 30 oil paintings inspired by his lifelong love for the Mediterranean. Starting in the 1970s, his travels as a backpacker with a watercolour pad ignited a passion that remains evident in his vibrant depictions of the region's diverse landscapes. The show highlights the enduring bond between the artist and the Mediterranean.

Fosse Gallery Fine Art, Stow on the Wold, GL54 1AF. fossegallery.com



LAVINIA FONTANA, PORTRAIT OF A NOBLEWOMAN, C.1580-1590. COLLECTION OF NICK COX PERIOD PORTRAITS

A SERENDIPITOUS RETURN: LAVINIA FONTANA'S MINIATURE PORTRAIT

25 January to 2 April 2025

A remarkable discovery has reunited Strawberry Hill House with another lost treasure after more than a century. Following the return of the lost Caligula, a miniature from Horace Walpole's celebrated collection has been identified thanks to a 19th-century drawing. Once believed to depict Bianca Capello, the artwork is now recognised as the work of Lavinia Fontana (1552–1614), one of the most accomplished female artists of the Renaissance. While the sitter's true identity remains uncertain, Bianca Capello's historical ties to Strawberry Hill add profound significance.

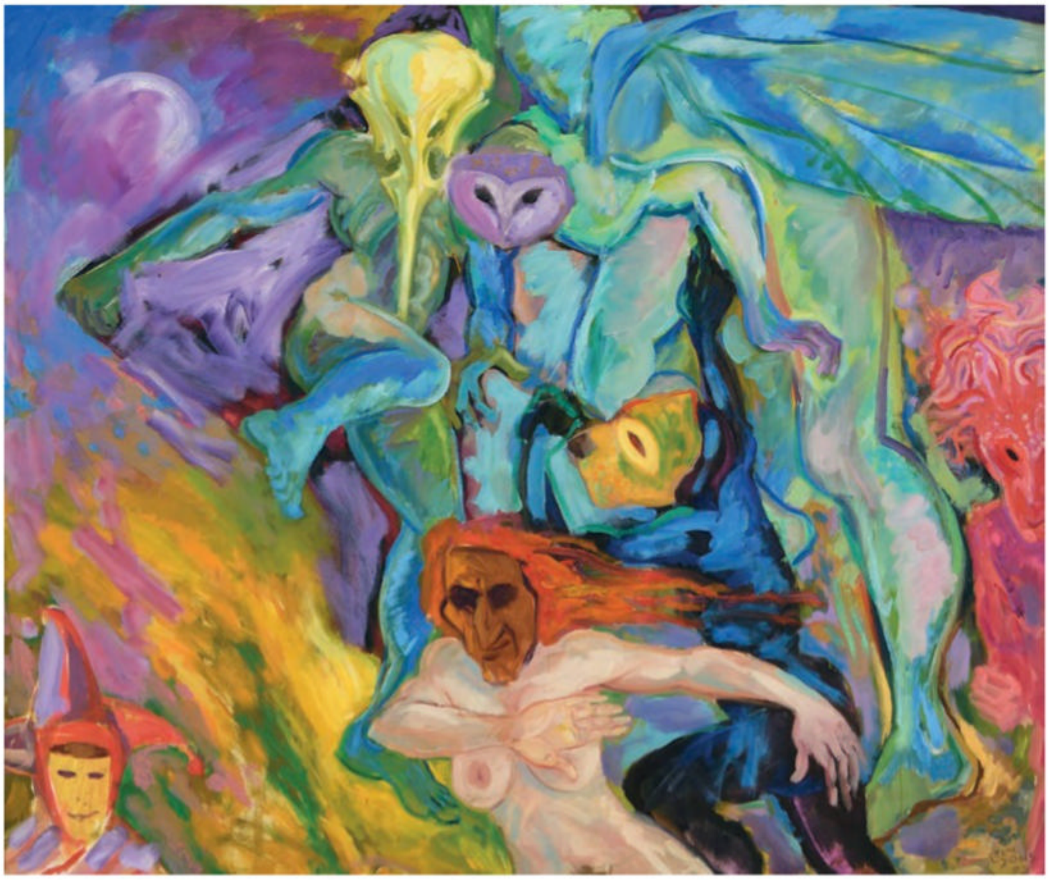
Strawberry Hill House, Twickenham TW1 4ST. strawberryhillhouse.org.uk

JOHN LYONS: CARNIVALESQUE

8 February to 5 May 2025

Carnivalesque is a major retrospective celebrating the 60-year career of Caribbean British artist and poet John Lyons. Showcased at The Box, the exhibition features over 40 works, including vibrant paintings, drawings, sketchbooks and poetry, reflecting Lyons' exploration of Trinidad and Tobago's folklore, mythology and carnival traditions. Highlights include motifs like the mythical 'jumbie bird' and scenes that blend vivid energy with mystery. Organised with the Whitworth, The University of Manchester, the exhibition also includes a catalogue and complementary displays from The Box's archives, connecting Lyons' work to Southwest England's carnival traditions.

The Box, Plymouth. Plymouth PL4 8AX. theboxplymouth.com



JOHN LYONS, 1992, MASQUERADING © JOHN C.M. LYONS

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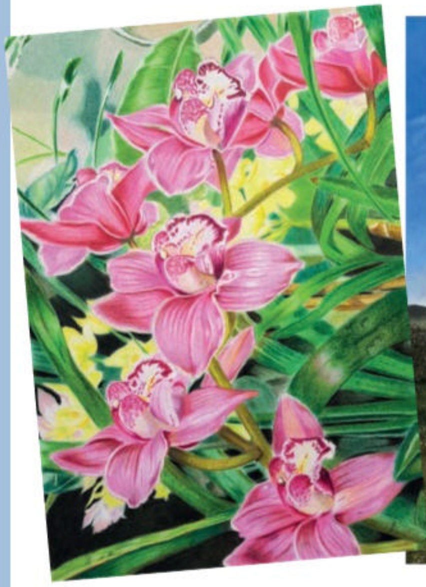

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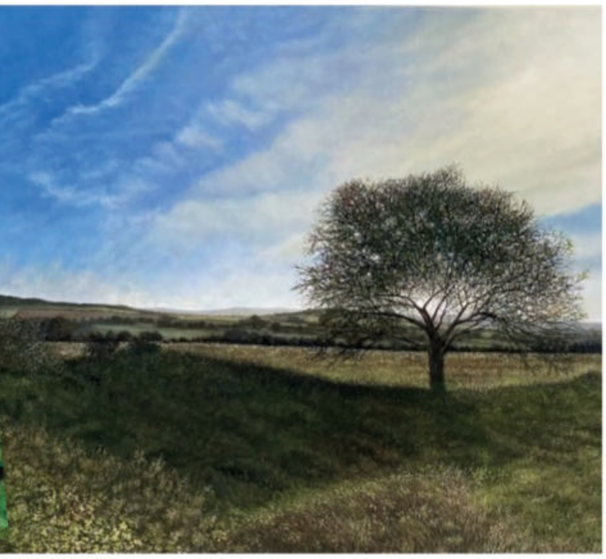


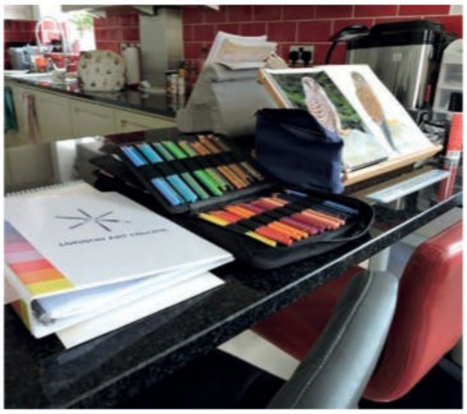
MARISSA LINDSELL

London Art College is a leading institution in online distance learning, dedicated to nurturing artistic talent from the comfort of their own home. With a diverse range of courses tailored for all skill levels, students can explore various disciplines, including painting, drawing, illustration and digital art. The courses are designed by experienced professionals who provide personalised feedback and guidance, ensuring a comprehensive learning experience.

Understanding the importance of flexibility in education, London Art College allows students to learn at their own pace, fitting their studies around personal and professional commitments. Whether beginners looking to explore their creativity or experienced artists seeking to refine their skills, students will find a supportive community and a wealth of resources to help them achieve their artistic goals.

The college offers a diverse array of online art courses designed to cater to various interests and skill levels. This includes drawing and painting, which explores the fundamentals of techniques across different media, watercolour to acrylics; illustration, which covers essential skills in character design and storyboarding, helping students create compelling visual narratives; digital art, which teaches software skills and digital painting techniques, empowering students to bring their artistic visions to life; and art history, which delves into significant movements, artists and the evolution of art over time, enriching the understanding of one's own practice.

Each course is designed to provide flexible learning experiences, enabling students to progress at their own pace while receiving personalised feedback from experienced tutors. For a full list of courses, prospective students can visit ***londonartcollege.co.uk*** □



THE PRIZE

Three winners, chosen at random, will each win a London Art College voucher worth up to £400.

HOW TO ENTER

Submit your entry by noon on 28 February 2025 at **artistsandillustrators.co.uk/competitions** or by mail to

London Art College,
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Vouchers must be redeemed within six months of the issue date by enrolling in an online course. Please note that no cash alternatives are available.
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LONDON ART COLLEGE LESSONS

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The closing date for entries is 28 February 2025.

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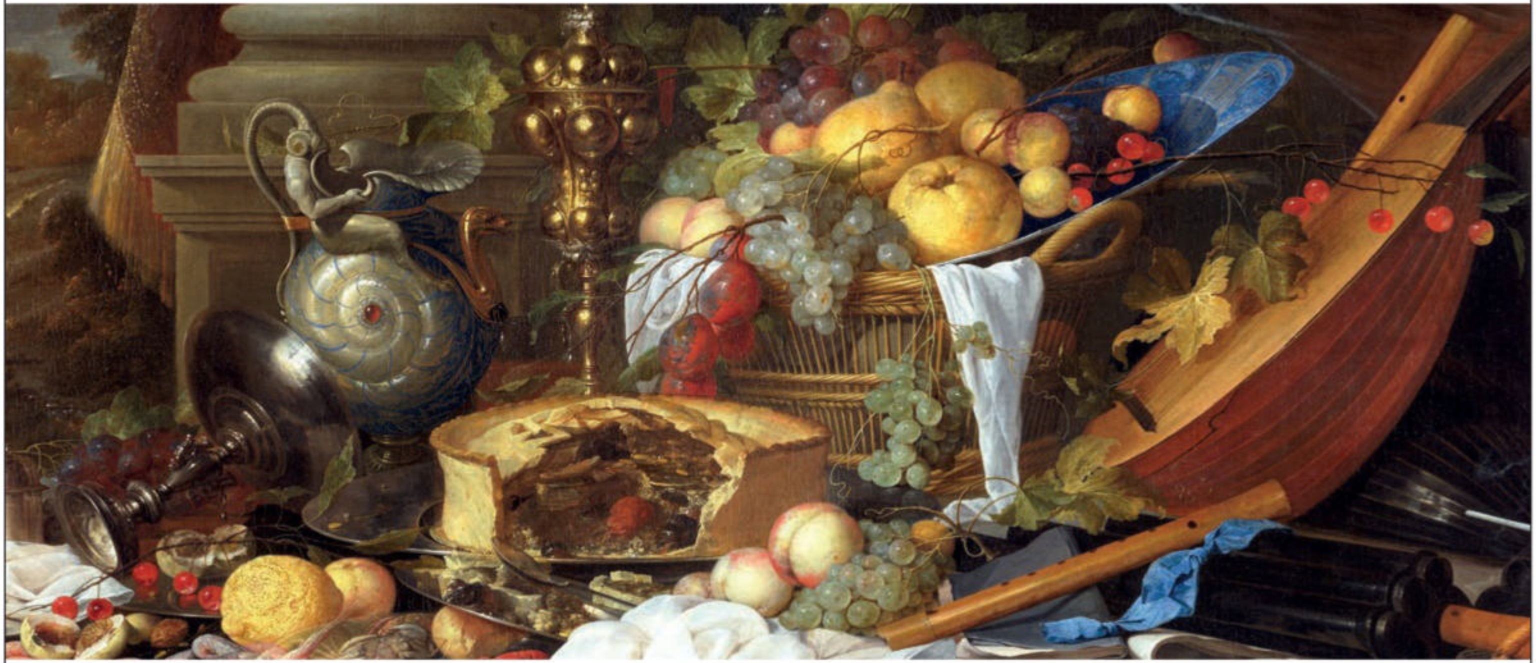

The Fitzwilliam Museum 3 December – 13 April 2025

Jan Davidsz de Heem, 'A banquet still life' (detail), 1643. Private Collection

UK Research and Innovation
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SWA
The Society of Women Artists

OPEN CALL FOR ARTISTS

Prizes and Awards valued over £6,000 including around £2,000 for young artists & Tom Urwin Award of £2,000

164th Annual Exhibition
Mall Galleries, London SW1
24th - 28th June 2025

Online Submission 2nd December 2024 - 8th March 2025

Please see website for full details
www.society-women-artists.org.uk

mall galleries

Image Credit: Julie Cross

Lavinia Fontana (1552 -1614) Portrait of a noblewoman, c. 1580-1590, oil on copper, 5.5 x 4.75cm. Collection of Nick Cox / Period Portraits.

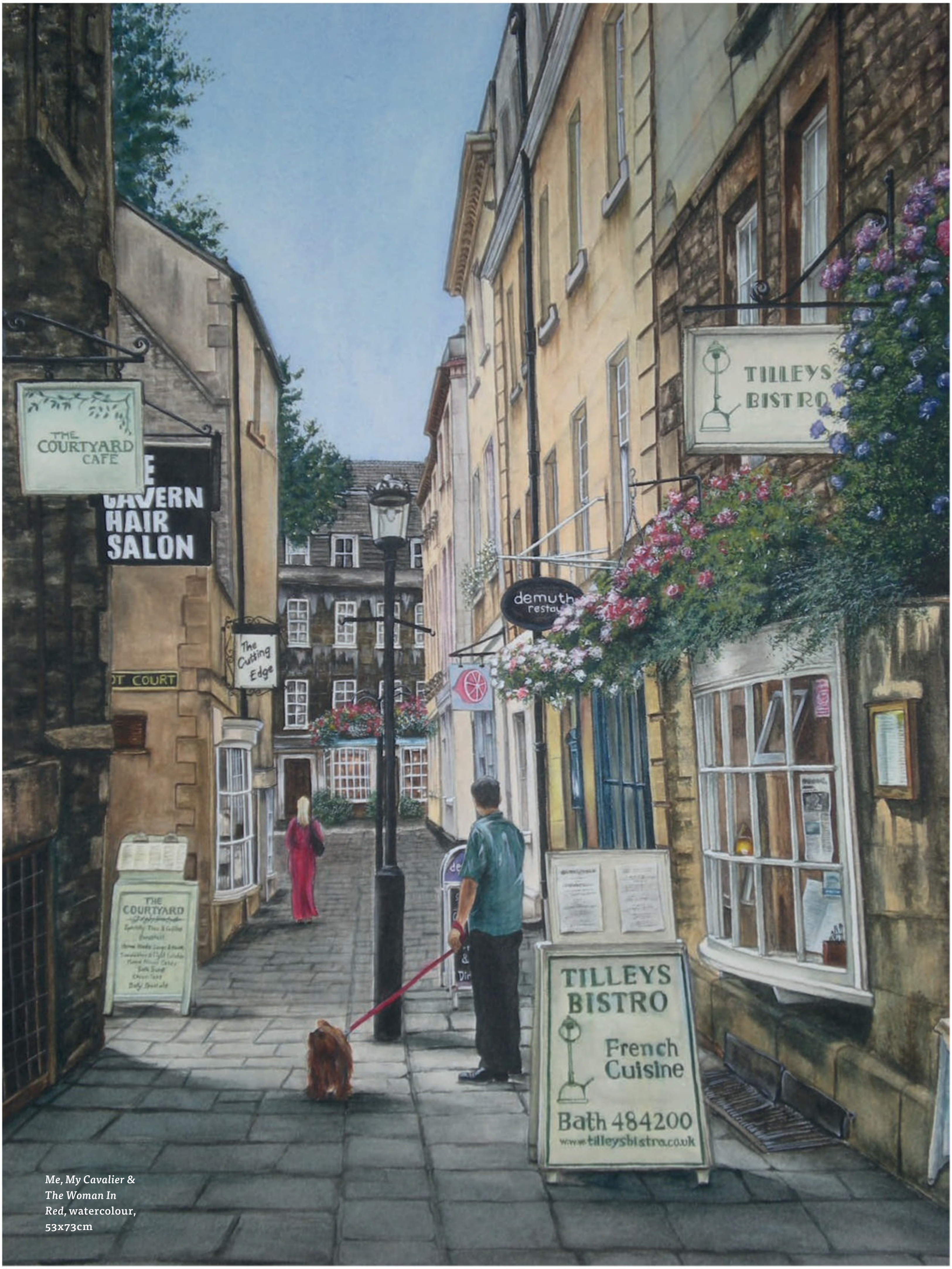
STRAWBERRY HILL
House & Garden

Explore Horace Walpole's beautifully restored 18th century Gothic castle

A remarkable discover has bought another lost treasure back to Strawberry Hill House after more than 100 years. Lavinia Fontana's miniature will be on display from 25 January - 2 April. Entry included in General Admission.

Strawberry Hill House, Saturday – Wednesday, 11am–4pm
Garden & Café, Saturday – Wednesday, 9am–4pm

Strawberry Hill House, Twickenham, TW1 4ST | Strawberry Hill Station (8 minutes walk) | strawberryhillhouse.org.uk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Me, My Cavalier & The Woman In Red, watercolour, 53x73cm

This month's spotlight on a British Art Club member

We present...

TOULLA HADJIGEORGIOU

This artist brings everyday moments to life through her expressive paintings

Although Toulla Hadjigeorgiou has always wanted to be an artist, she remembers being told that "it was not a proper profession." Yet, her passion for painting emerged at a young age; her art journey shaped by her early experiences and the world around her.

"At around five years old in primary school, a few kids in my class would want me to draw for them," she recalls. The vivid scent of powdered paint mixed with water and the 'canvas' – reminiscent of paper used to wrap fish and chips – are cherished memories of her early creativity. When her parents gifted her a Reeves Oil Painting Set at age 12, she discovered a new medium. She still uses the palette knife that came with it.

Toulla primarily paints people, pets and architecture, but enjoys experimenting with various subjects. "I need to constantly challenge myself and move away from my comfort zone," she explains, often exploring inks and mixed media. She feels particularly drawn to "groups of people going about their daily lives," finding unique stories in each individual, especially older adults.

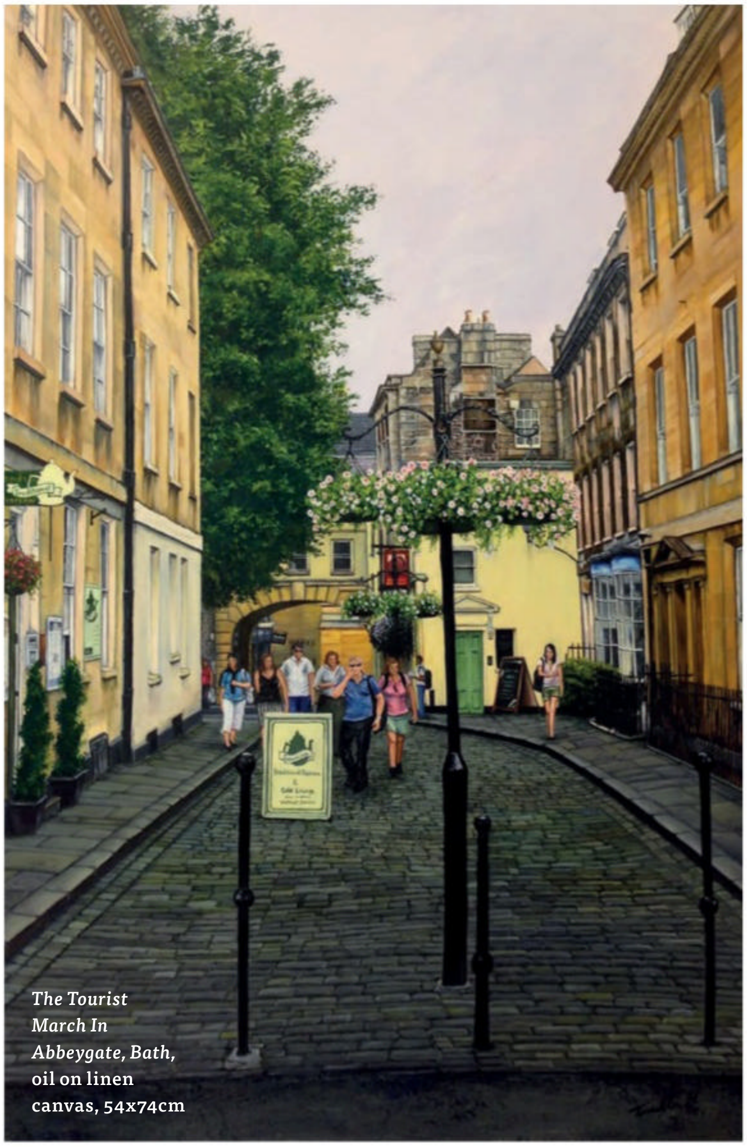
Her medium of choice has evolved over the years. "For many years, my medium was oil," she says, "but today, my style suits both oil and watercolour." She appreciates the versatility of oil, which she finds "forgiving" and ideal for layering, while her approach to watercolour defies traditional techniques. "I paint layer over layer to produce strong, vibrant colour," she adds.

Growing up in a family with little interest in art, Toulla faced challenges in pursuing her passion. Nevertheless, she found inspiration in the works of old masters like Canaletto and Vermeer, noting that "some influence came from personally studying the technical skill of traditional art."

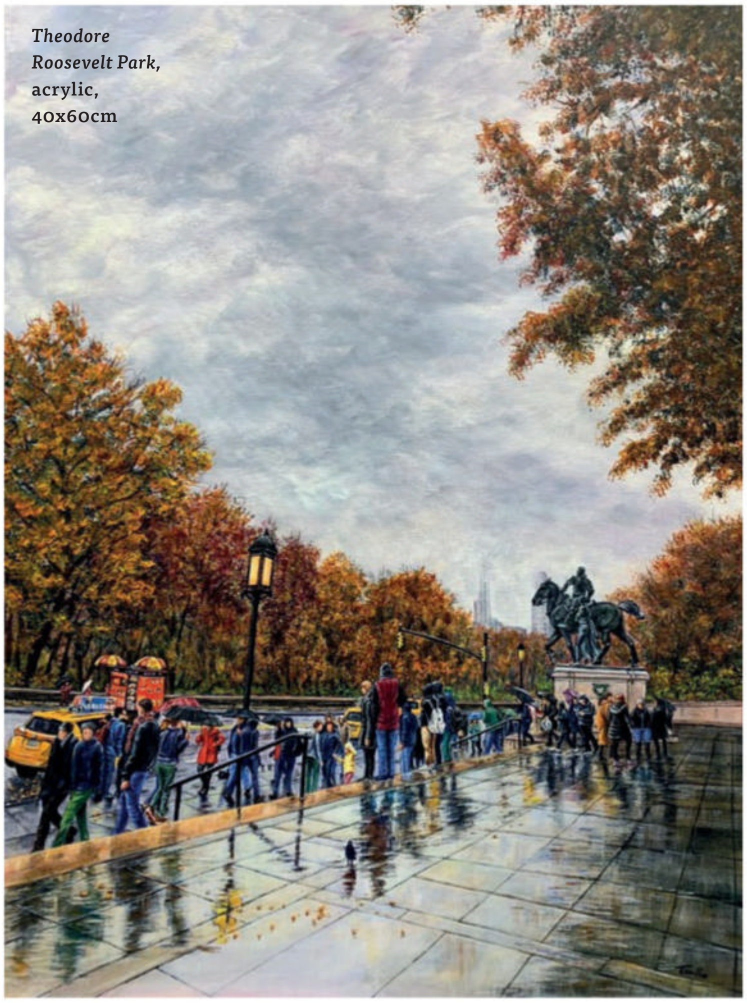
Now, living in the countryside, her surroundings move her art. "I am inspired to paint more landscapes, farm life and animals," she shares. Her travels also play a significant role in her work, as she seeks out quieter places for reference.

Toulla aims to capture the essence of her subjects, prompting viewers to reflect on the stories behind the scenes she paints. "I want them to consider what the people in a scene are experiencing," she explains. By staying true to her artistic vision and avoiding trends, she creates distinctive works that celebrate the beauty of everyday life.

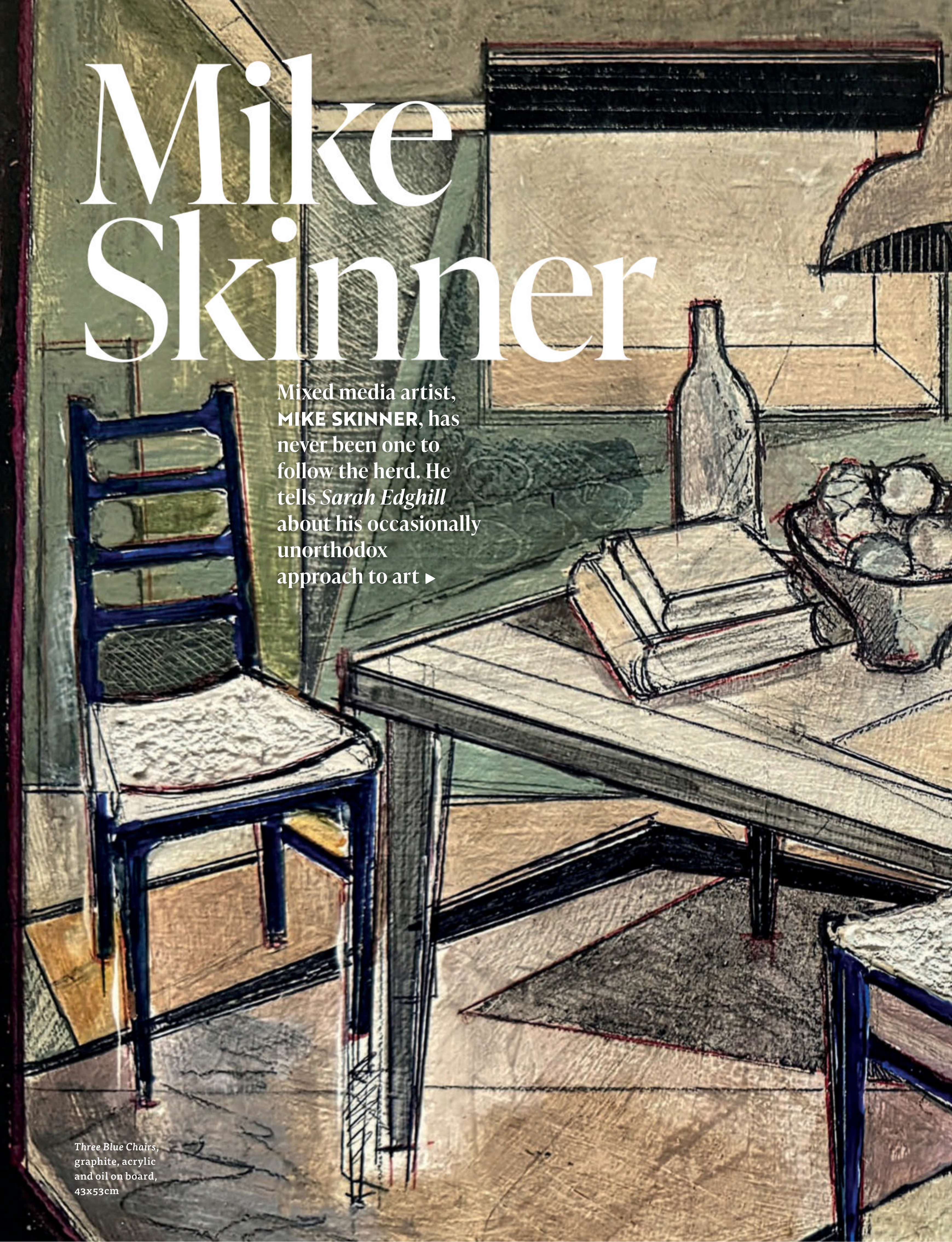
britishartclub.co.uk/profile/toullaart ☐



The Tourist March In Abbeygate, Bath, oil on linen canvas, 54x74cm



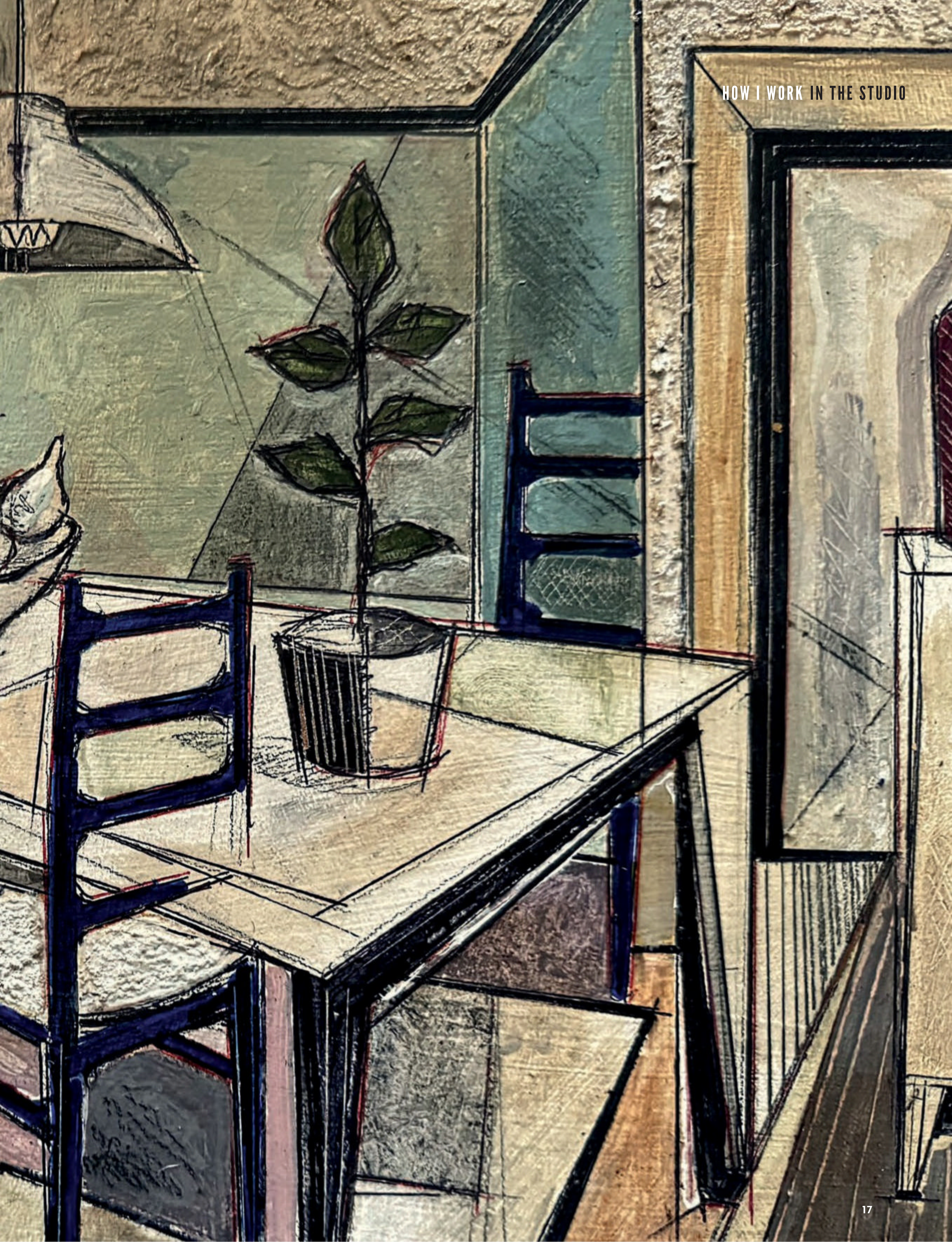
Theodore Roosevelt Park, acrylic, 40x60cm



Mike Skinner

Mixed media artist, **MIKE SKINNER**, has never been one to follow the herd. He tells *Sarah Edghill* about his occasionally unorthodox approach to art ▸

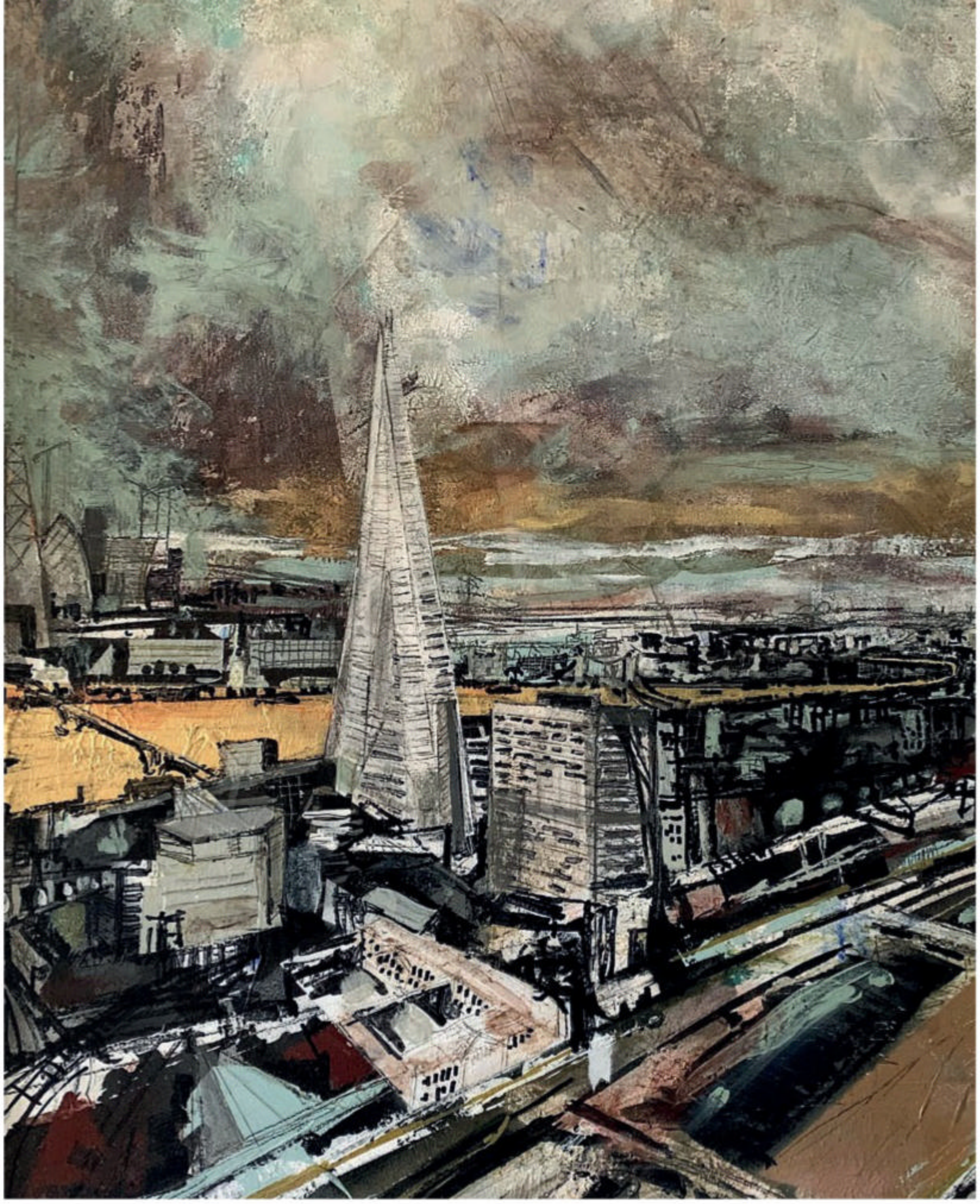
Three Blue Chairs, graphite, acrylic and oil on board, 43x53cm



After leaving school, Mike secured a place at Barking Art School, doing a foundation course and then a three-dimensional Art and Design course. He then worked as a designer for several years before moving into fine art. As a professional artist, his main interest is in modern British subjects, from abstract to figurative. He lives in Gloucestershire and has exhibited work in group and solo shows in London – including at The Royal Academy of Arts, The Mall Gallery, The Menier Gallery, Christie's Fine Art and Chelsea Harbour Design Centre – and closer to home in the southwest at The Victoria Art Gallery Bath and The Royal West Academy in Bristol.

When you walk through the door of his house, near Stroud in Gloucestershire, you're surrounded by more art than you'd find in any gallery. The walls of every room are lined with paintings he has collected over the years, some by well-known artists, others by amateurs, friends and neighbours. His taste is eclectic and he has a real eye for displaying it, although there is no obvious system: large landscapes are beside bijou still lifes, charcoal portraits above abstract works.

"About 90 per cent of the work I have hanging in my home is by other artists," he says. "It's a diverse collection. Sometimes I buy from fellow artists in shows I've been in, but I also buy art in junk shops, from galleries and on eBay. I see things I like everywhere."



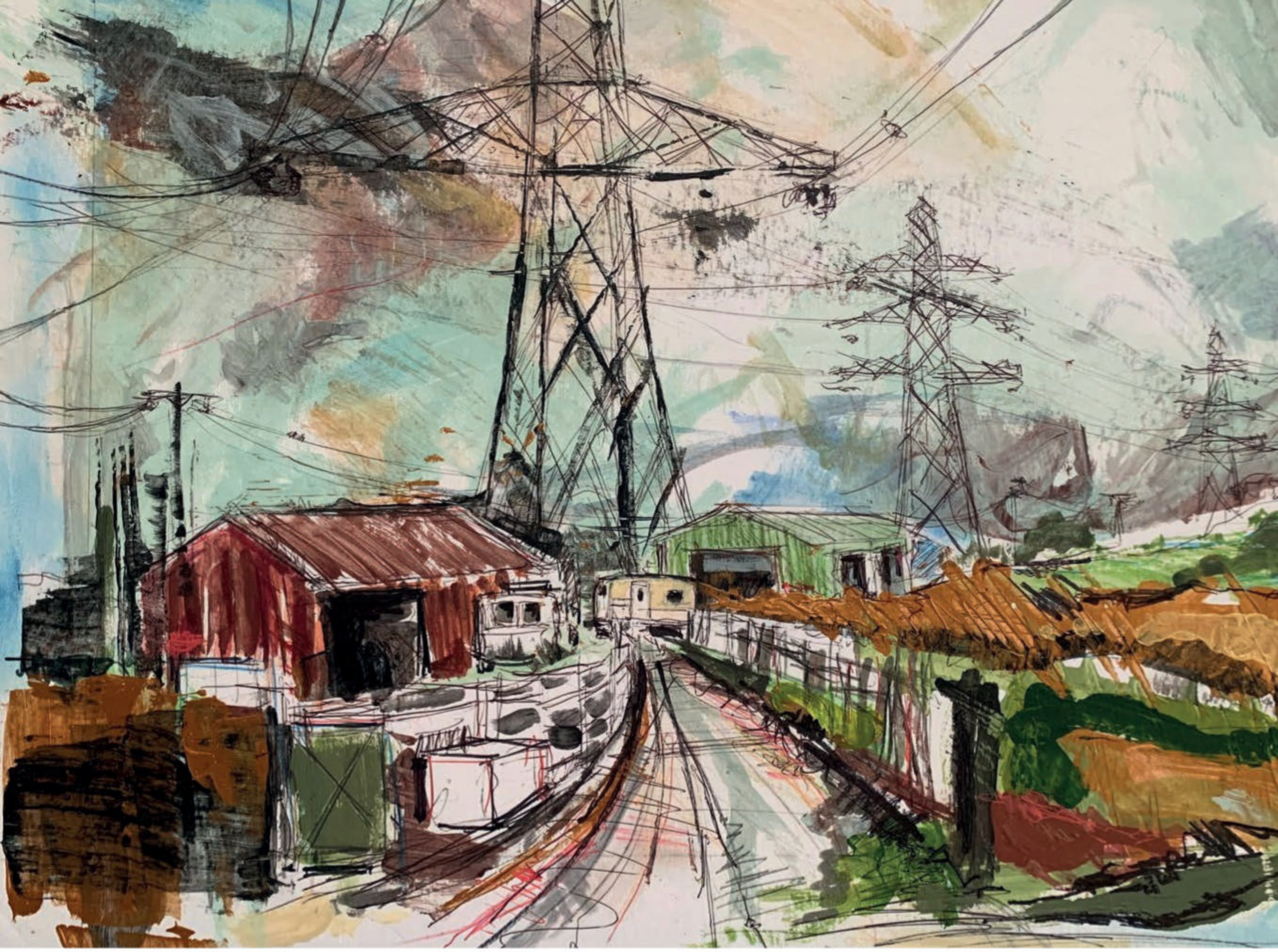
Mike himself works principally in pencil, marker pen, biro and mixed medium paints. "I love to work in all mediums, a lot of the time combining drawing into painting. In my view, if it works then do it. The rule is that there are no rules. My method really depends on what I'm trying to achieve and I try and maintain an energy in my images, which comes from the human hand mark-making. Working on commissions over the years has forced me to develop methods to create works in a time frame and to a client brief, and that has given me the confidence to dip in and out of genres: from landscape commissions to lockdown still lives and abstracts when I'm feeling reflective."

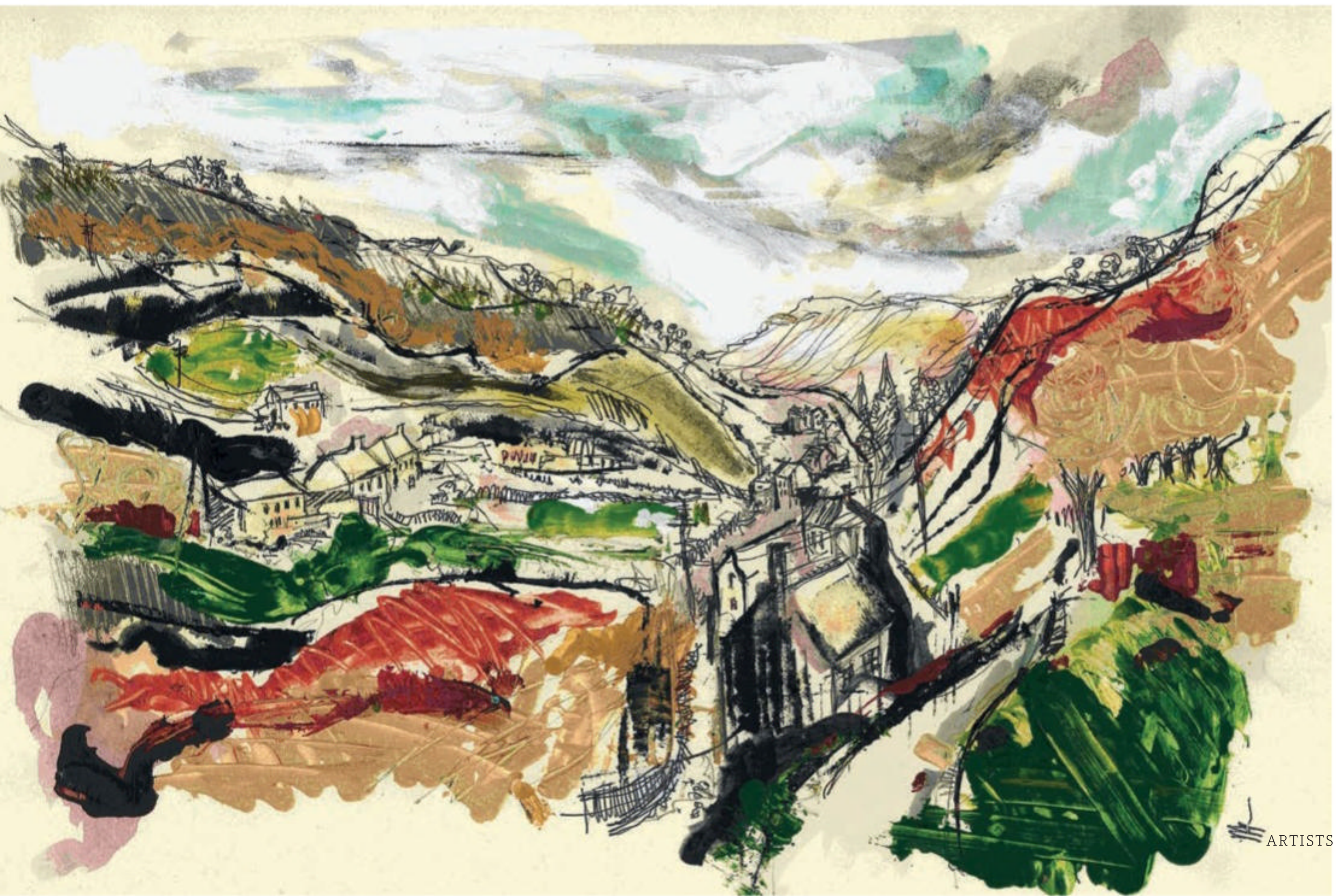
Mike was born on one of the largest East London council estates and his grandfather was an amateur artist who had a big influence on him, teaching him to see things differently. "He had a book on Michaelangelo and as a child, I used to copy those images and it really got me started," he remembers. "I have always been in awe of art history and some of my work references this in, I hope, a playful way. For instance, the blue chairs I've been doing recently are directly related to Van Gogh."

After leaving art school in the eighties, Mike drifted for a few years, taking a succession of casual jobs before eventually being offered work with a London design company. "But the guy who interviewed me almost immediately went to Harrods and took me with him, so I found myself working as a designer for the store and its portfolio of properties. Another colleague was the director of a company opening a shop in Japan, so I later went there and started doing paintings on the floors of building sites in Tokyo. That tipped me towards doing more commercial artwork but, although I did well in the commercial world and it was good money, after a while I realised I didn't want to be restricted in my subject matter. I had paintings hanging in office blocks all across the City of London – they may still be there, for all I know – but after a while it felt like I was heading up a blind alley, going nowhere and doing the same thing day in, day out. There was another side to me that was frustrated and wanted to do something different and that's when I decided to become a fine artist."

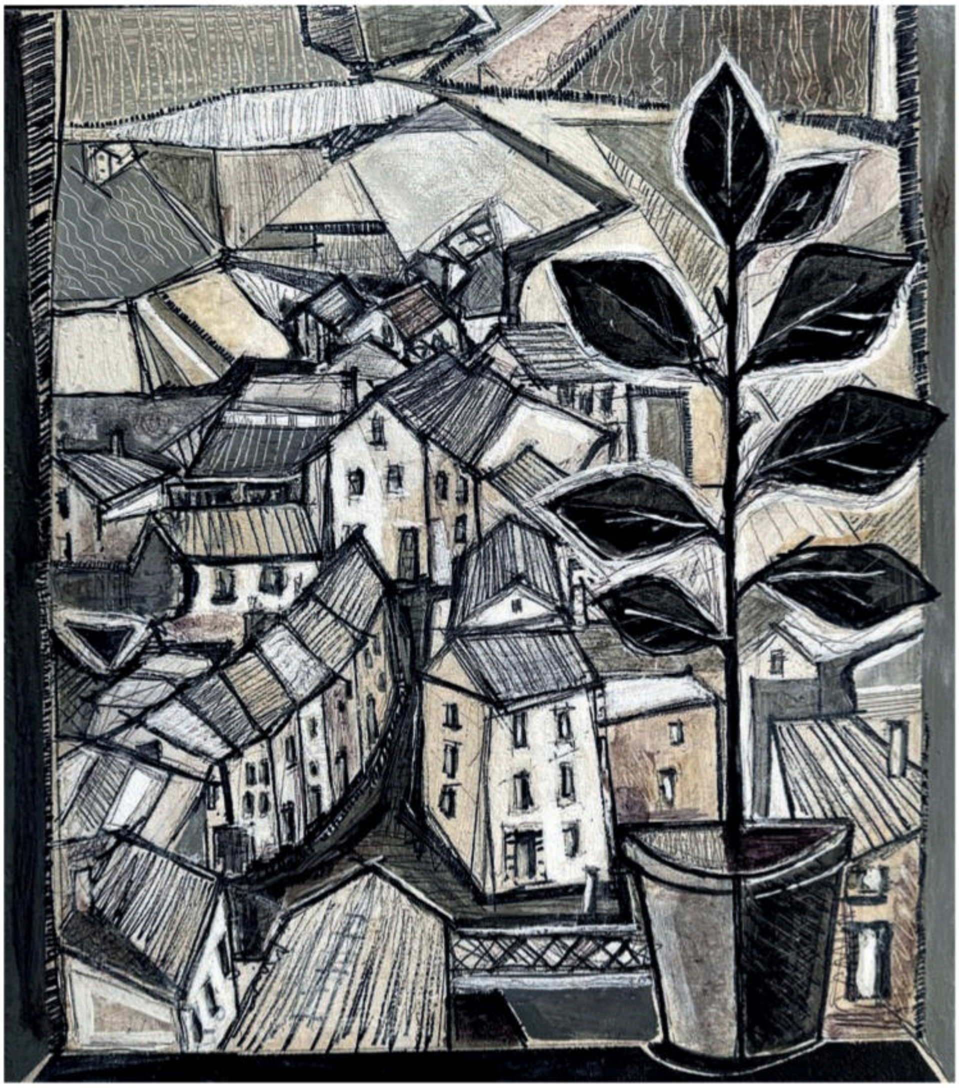
Even once that decision had been made, Mike refused to follow a traditional path. "Abstract is now an art form, but when I started doing it in the nineties, it felt like delinquent behaviour. It was all related to me trying to express myself through painting and drawing, but it wasn't necessarily what people wanted to hang on their walls. But I've always been interested in pushing my work forward and exploring the possibilities of the image-making process. Because of that, my work is constantly evolving and I paint a wide range of subjects and use different styles. Not having a self-imposed restriction on the subject matter gives me total freedom to explore all possibilities in art. I have been told I have a distinctive style and colour pallette, but that has developed organically over the decades."

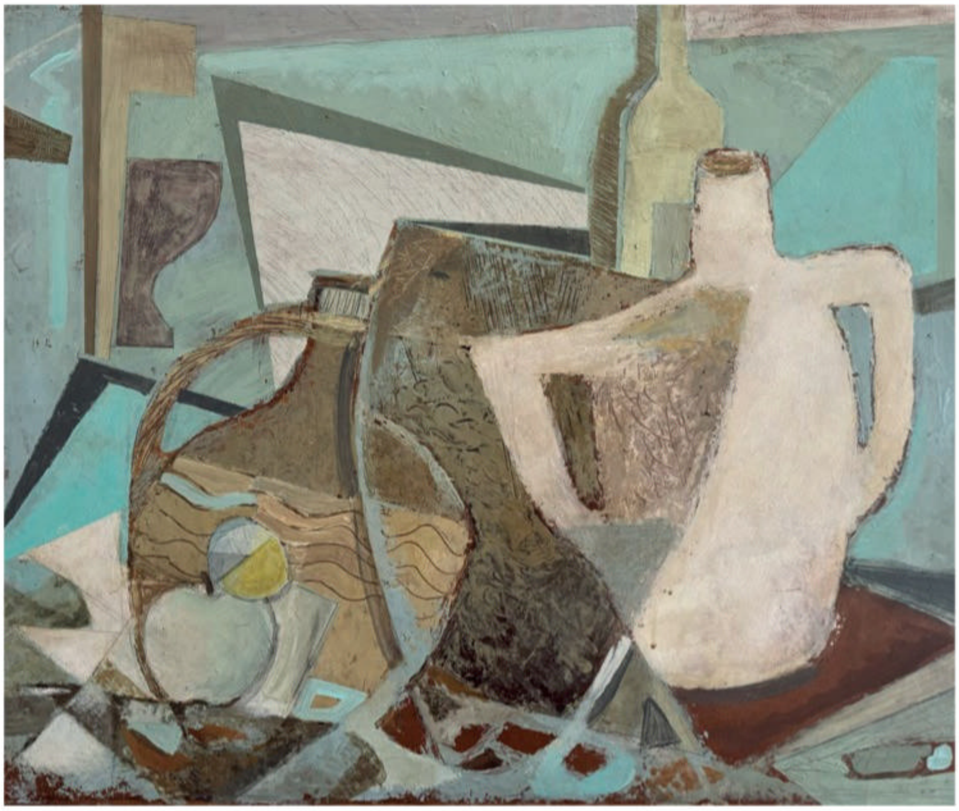
In many of his more recent paintings, the under-drawing is very evident. Mike explains that this happened by accident initially, but is now something he does deliberately. "As a council member of The Drawing Society, I have to demonstrate to them that I still draw! But I've always liked the fact that people can ▶





TOP LEFT *The Shard*, graphite pen, oil and acrylic on board, 120x80cm
TOP RIGHT *The Grid*, graphite ink on paper, 47x53cm
LEFT *The Golden Valley*, graphite ink on paper, 38x55cm





TOP *From the Window*, graphite pen, ink and acrylic on board, 45x42cm
BELOW *Five Vessels*, graphite and acrylic on board, 77x91cm

see the construction of a picture – being able to see the bone structure of something in the background."

Like the rest of his house, Mike's studio is crowded with artworks – his own and those of other artists – alongside found objects he has collected, from odd bits of furniture (at the moment chairs are a favourite) to vases, old frames and what he calls 'objects dust,' the sort of bits and pieces you'd find in a curiosity cabinet. "Most of them don't even end up in my work!"

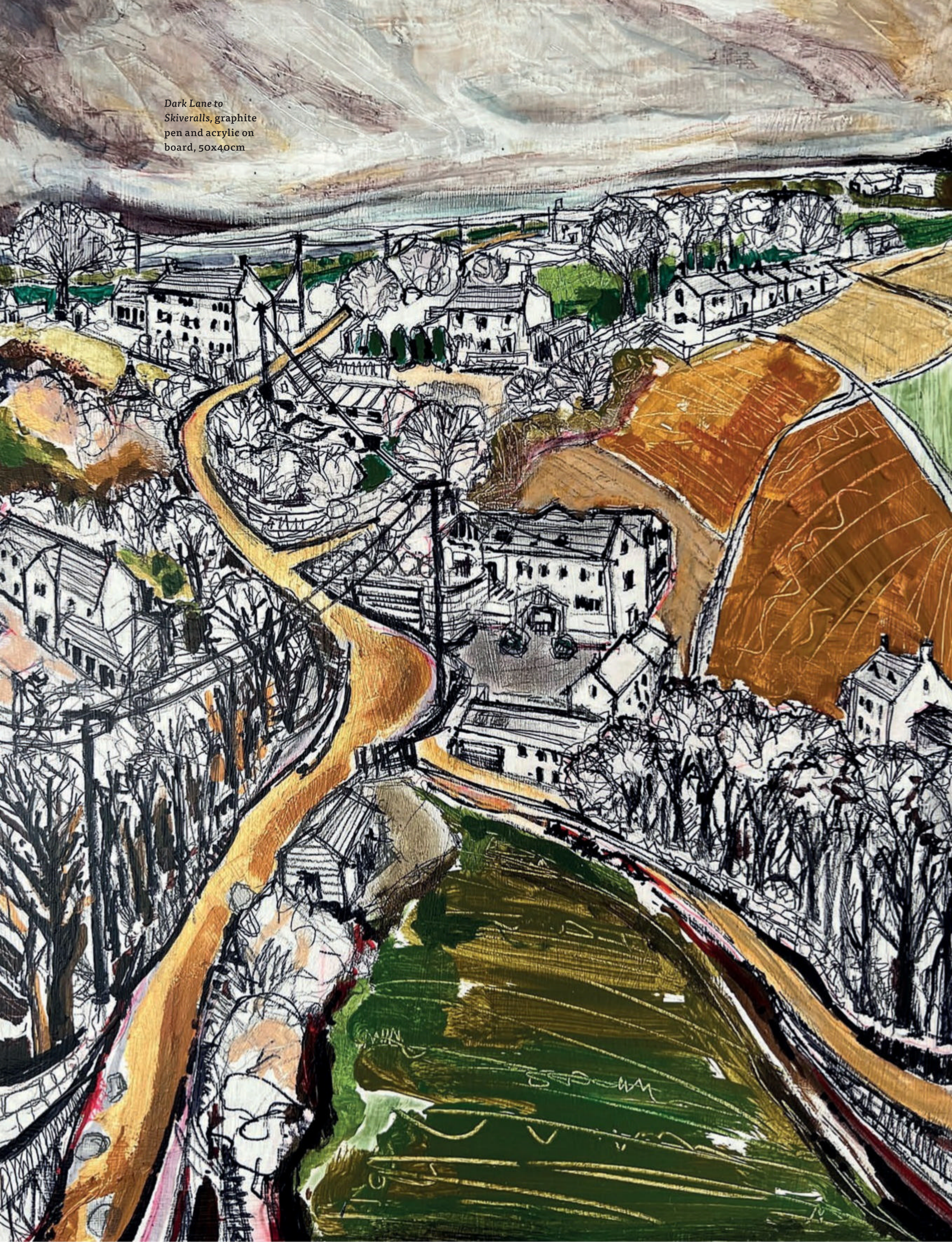
Unusually, he never uses an easel, whatever the size of the painting he's working on. "I might stand a bigger picture up against the wall, but I never put work at an angle; it's always on the flat. I have no idea why, I just seem to have an aversion to doing things like a classical artist. I need to be going in every direction all the time."

Although he admits he's a messy artist, Mike knows where everything is in his studio and has his own system of organisation. "I put all the paints in plastic containers, sorted by colour rather than medium, so monochromes are all together, reds, oranges, greens. It means I can get to them quickly, but it also means I might pick up an oil-based paint and it ends up on a water-based picture – and sometimes that works really well."

Mike is prolific and at any one time will be working on three or four different pieces. His paintings have appeared in solo and group exhibitions across the country. "I enjoy getting the work out there into the wider world," he says. "I enter a lot of open submission shows and I enjoy the peer approval from art groups. The solo shows are also important for getting instant feedback on my works from potential buyers. The paintings art societies respond to, are very different to the ones that might sell in a solo show, slightly more radical, and even the framing may be slightly bonkers."

Framing is a subject about which he feels very strongly. "A bad frame can devalue an image – and not just in a monetary sense. The way people view what you produce can be seriously impacted by how it's presented. One year, when I was exhibiting at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition, the work next to mine had its frame removed by the RA curator, who later told me it was very rare for him to keep work in the show with a bad frame. I later bought that painting for my own collection but chucked the frame away."

Mike's work will be on display at The Society of Graphic Fine Art's 104th Open Exhibition at the Mall Galleries, London SW1, from 10-15 March 2025. □



Dark Lane to Skiveralls, graphite pen and acrylic on board, 50x40cm

HOW I MAKE IT WORK

Sergiu Ciochina

With over 250K followers on Instagram, this artist shares how he 'made it'

I didn't choose art; art chose me. That is probably the most clichéd answer. Yet, I believe it defines a dedicated artist and I consider myself to be one. The journey towards creation is never easy, especially when you're born in Moldova, where any success comes hand-in-hand with a continuous struggle to find the right place, style, inspiration and people to guide you.

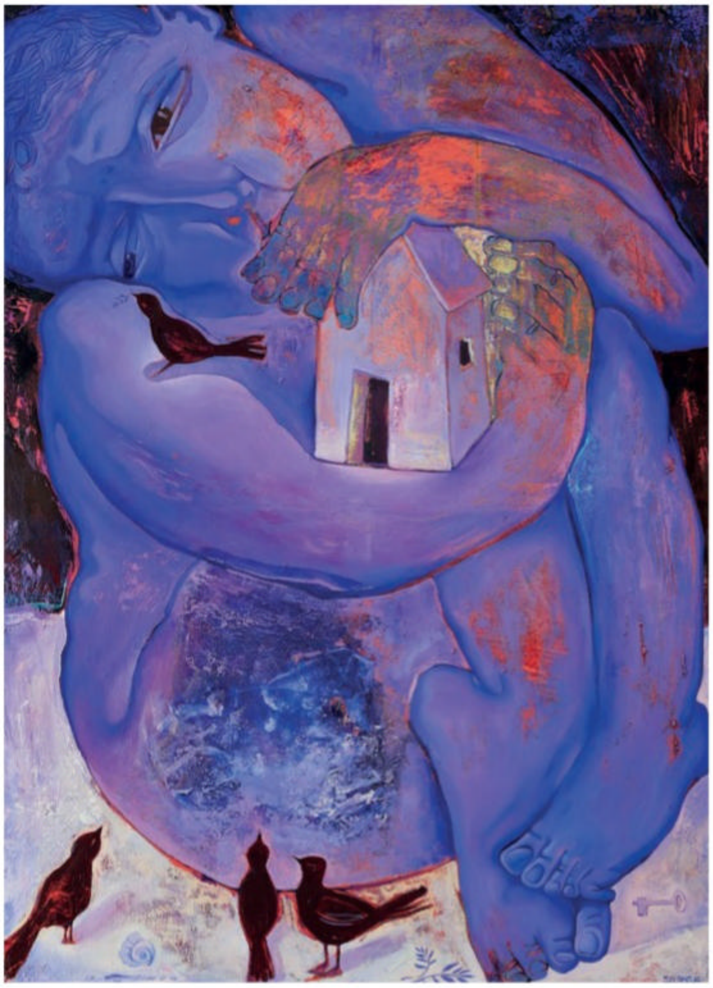
My figurative style was born out of a love for people's inner worlds. What I create reflects what I feel; an expression of the things we all experience: family, love, longing, loneliness, affection, innocence. So, what draws me in? It's the people who bring stories, history and emotions. Landscapes, on the other hand, bring atmosphere, outward expressions and other kinds of emotions. They provide me with an emotional backdrop and a palette of colours and teach me patience with nature, while figurative art adds a human and narrative dimension and teaches me patience with myself. In fact, I try to create a symbiosis between the two. Even if I separate them, they both technically define me as an artist.

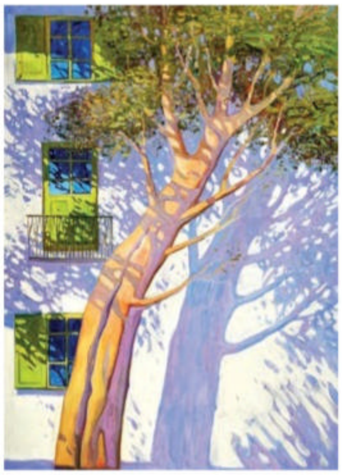
Leaving Moldova defined my entire artistic journey. In 2021, I first went to Italy, where I painted for three months before returning to Moldova to continue for another two years. It wasn't easy at all to readjust my goals and move my studio. However, in 2023, I finally relocated to Paris, France, thanks to a talent visa. This had a positive butterfly effect. I received an unprecedented dose of inspiration from the Parisian streets, shadows, nature – the vivid green and the blue of the water; nothing could be stronger than this, at least for now.

There's no single, specific moment that brought me success and I'm certain there's still a long road ahead. I wouldn't change a thing about my journey, every choice was intentional and I'm grateful that my paintings have reached people's hearts and homes around the world. What could be more fulfilling?

mylandscape.store

artserge.com □





TOP *You Are Your Own Home*, oil on canvas, 110x160cm **BELOW** *I Am Watching Your Windows Again*, oil on canvas, 114x162cm

SERGIU'S TIPS FOR MAKING IT AS A FULL-TIME ARTIST

1

Self-criticism is the best remedy

Avoid falling into the trap of commercial subjects or following trends.

2

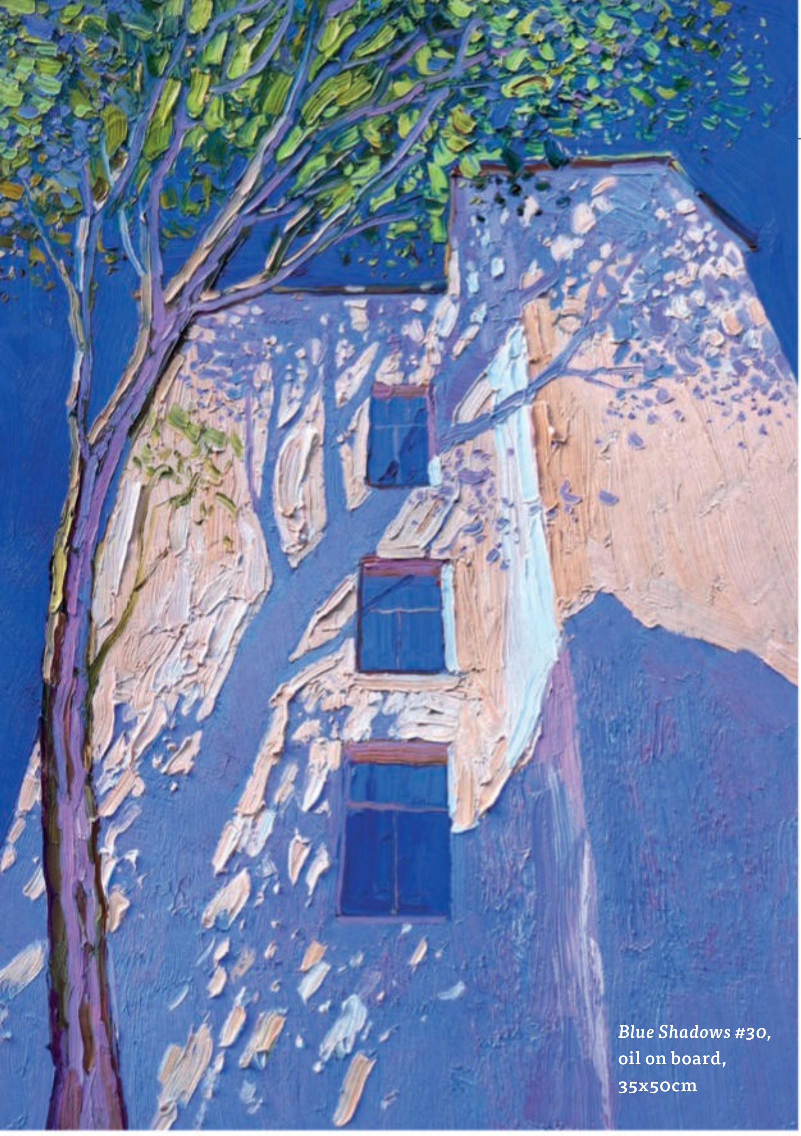
Work hard and consistently

What I have now is thanks to my studies, countless hours in the studio and days spent in front of the easel.

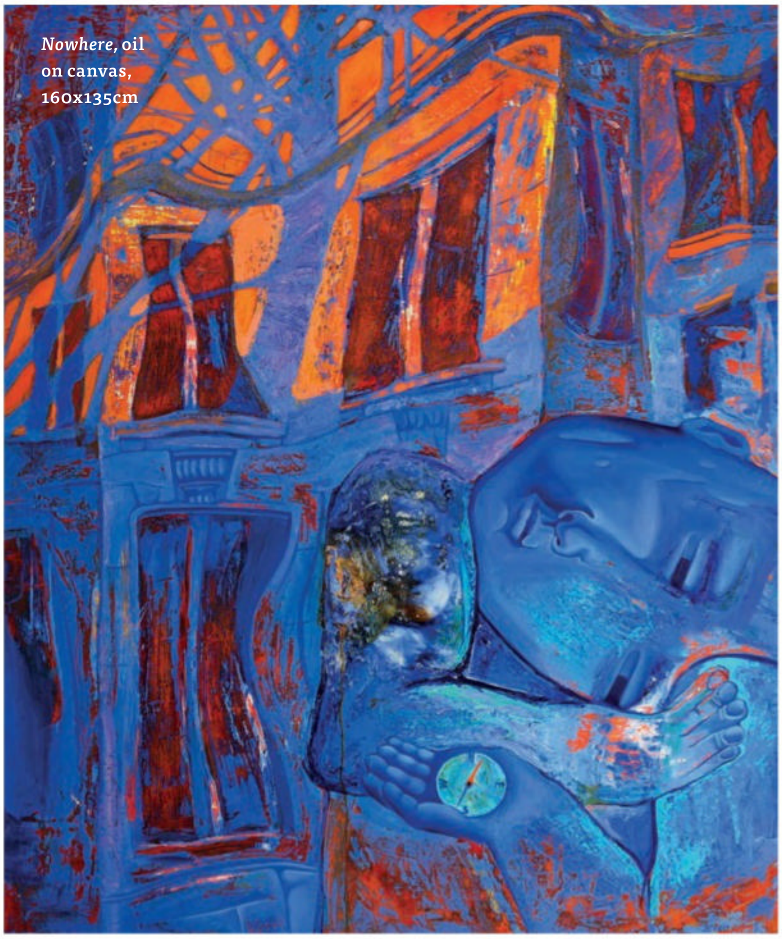
3

The creative process is complete when a painting reaches collections

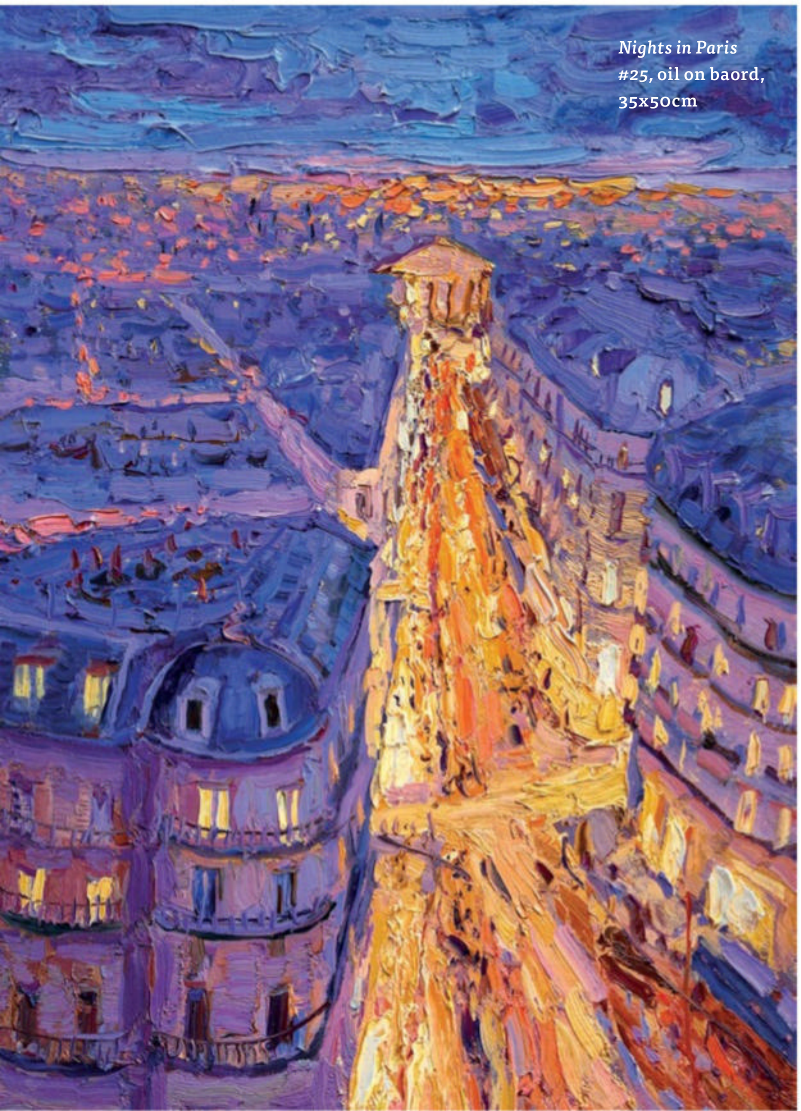
But it would be wonderful to extend this process by exhibiting the works before they are sold or collected



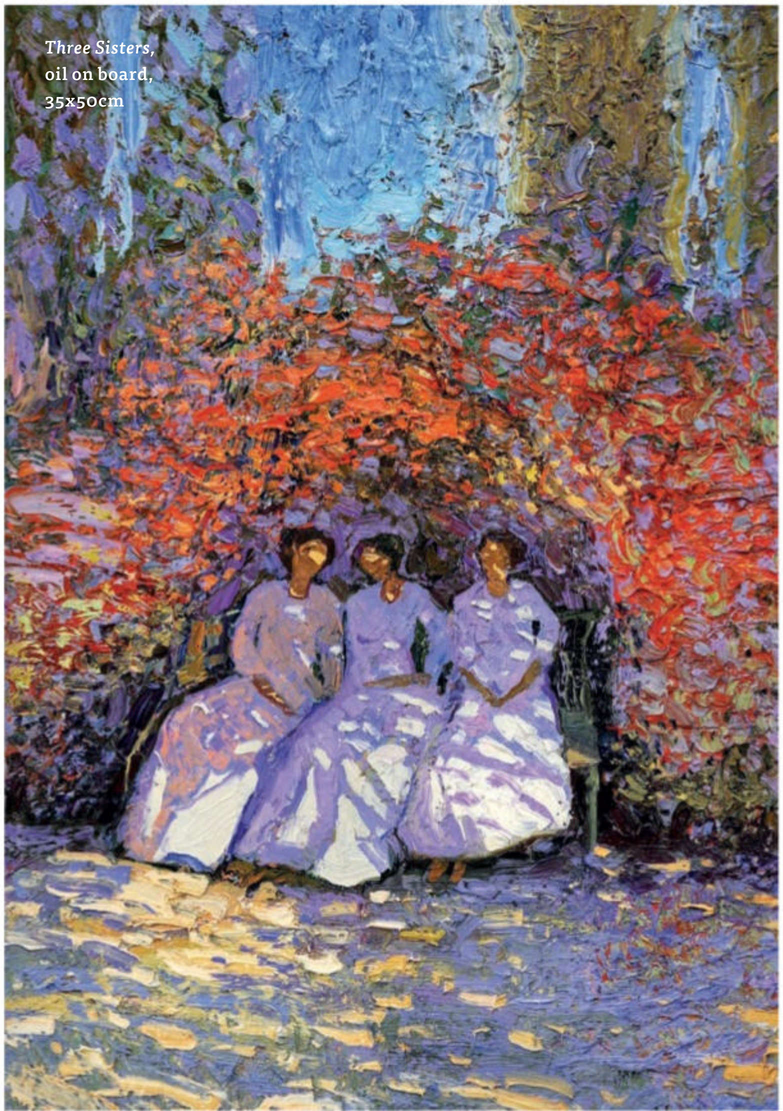
Blue Shadows #30, oil on board, 35x50cm



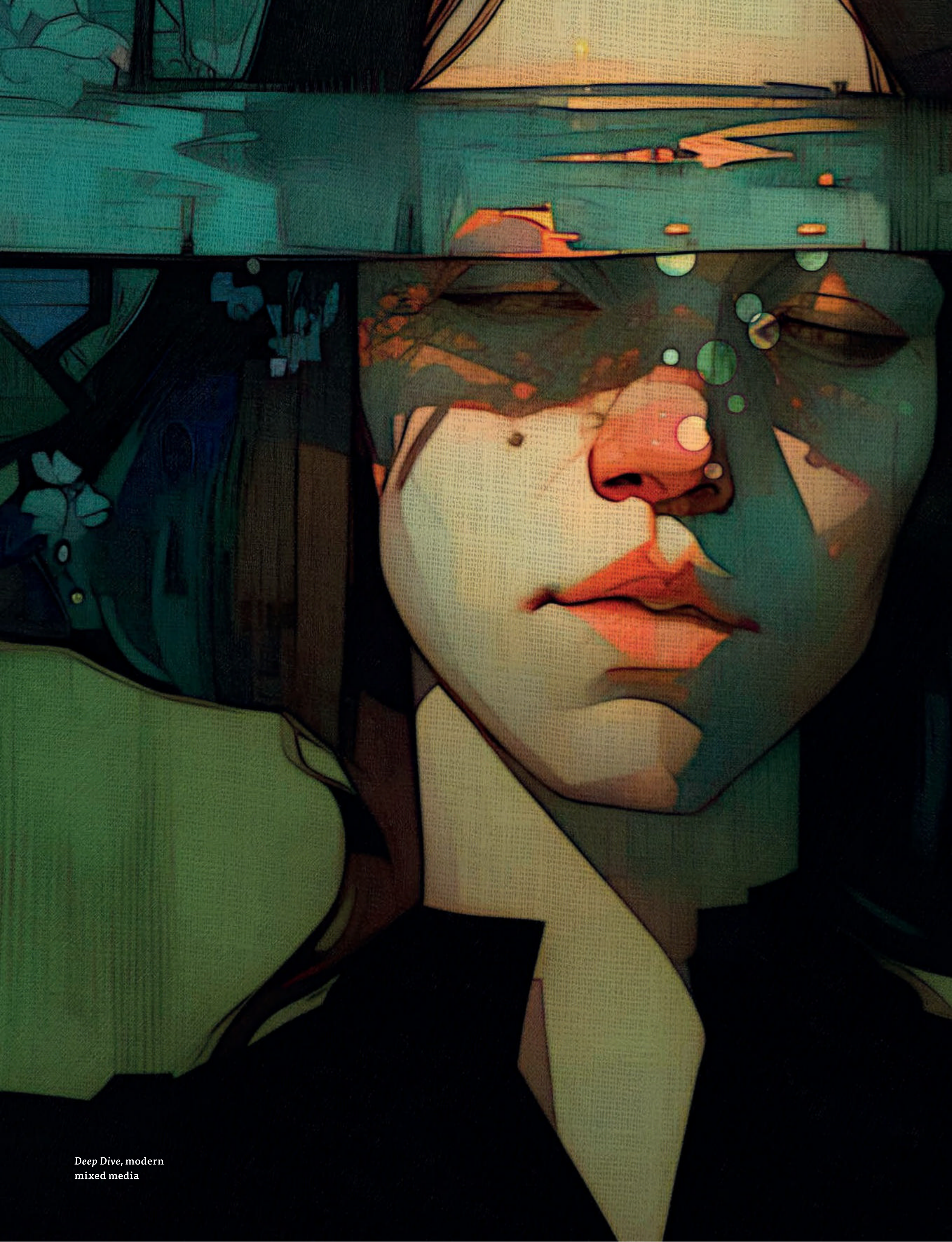
Nowhere, oil on canvas, 160x135cm



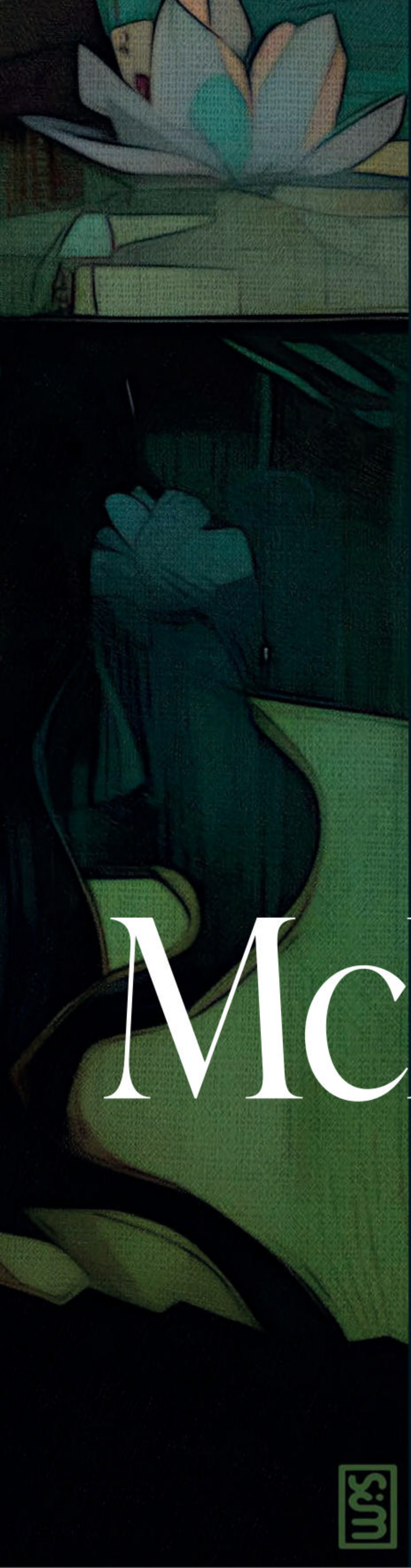
Nights in Paris #25, oil on baord, 35x50cm



Three Sisters, oil on board, 35x50cm



Deep Dive, modern
mixed media



JASON VAN BRUGGEN

Steve McDonald

This artist creates art that is fantastical but with a foot firmly planted in reality. *Ramsha Vistro* learns more

Steve McDonald is a prominent Canadian artist and illustrator known for his intricate line drawings and imaginative interpretations of architecture and landscapes, both real and fantastical. Often calling himself an "image crafter," Steve transforms his ideas into engaging visual narratives. His acclaimed colouring book series has garnered international success and showcased his unique style to a wide audience. His impressive portfolio also includes notable clients such as *Architectural Digest*, Amazon and *The Atlantic*.

Steve was a successful landscape painter for two decades and has since developed a keen interest in various mediums, especially digital. Beyond his studio work, he shares his expertise through lectures and courses, focusing on the practical and ethical aspects of new tools.
sdmcdonald.com ▸

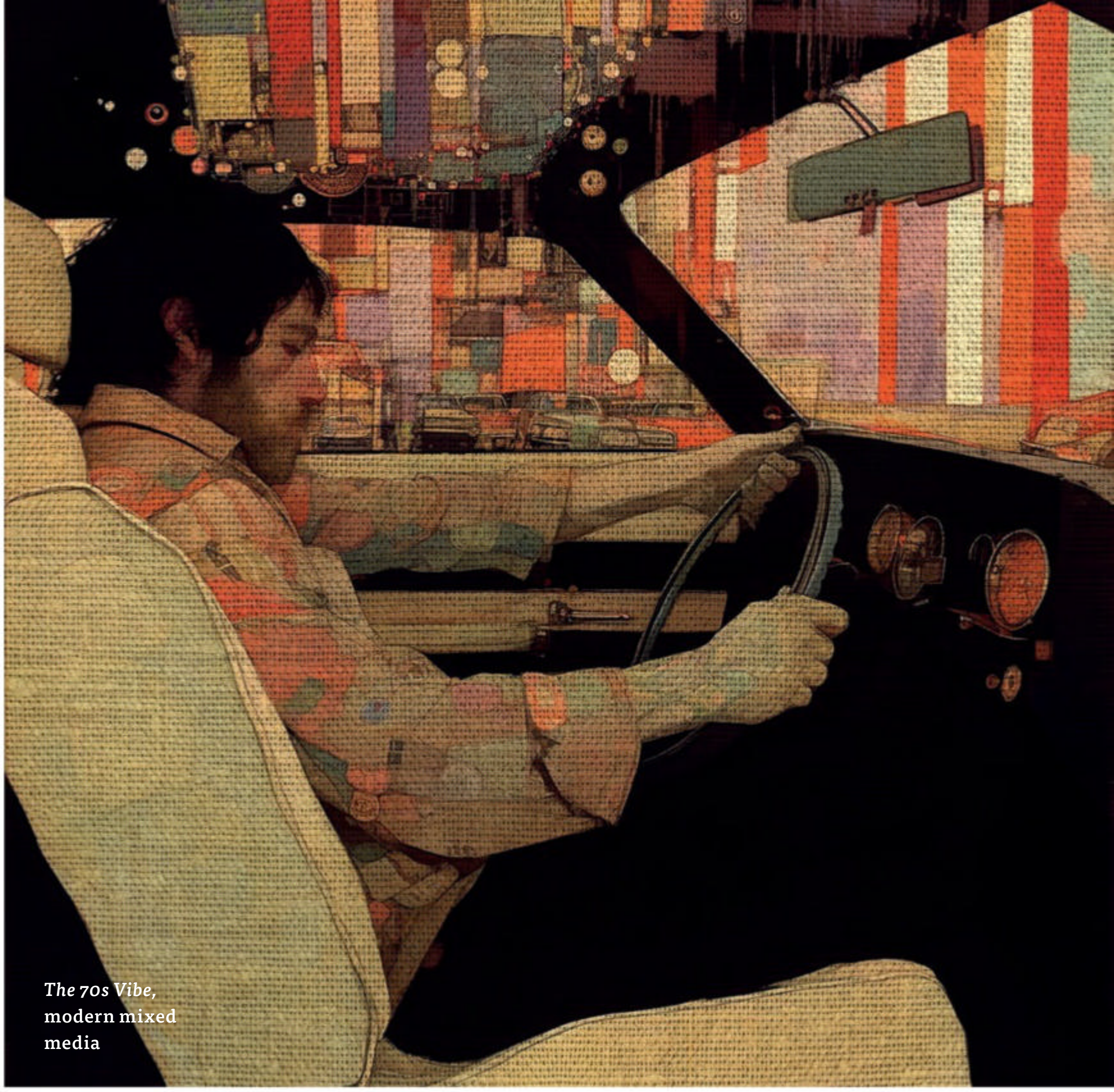
My journey began, as it often does, with doodles.
Though, I suppose the pivotal moment was when those doodles on the margins of school notebooks became something I couldn't ignore. I became a successful landscape painter early on, but a shift toward architectural drawing and illustration eventually pulled me into a broader world of publishing books and visual storytelling.

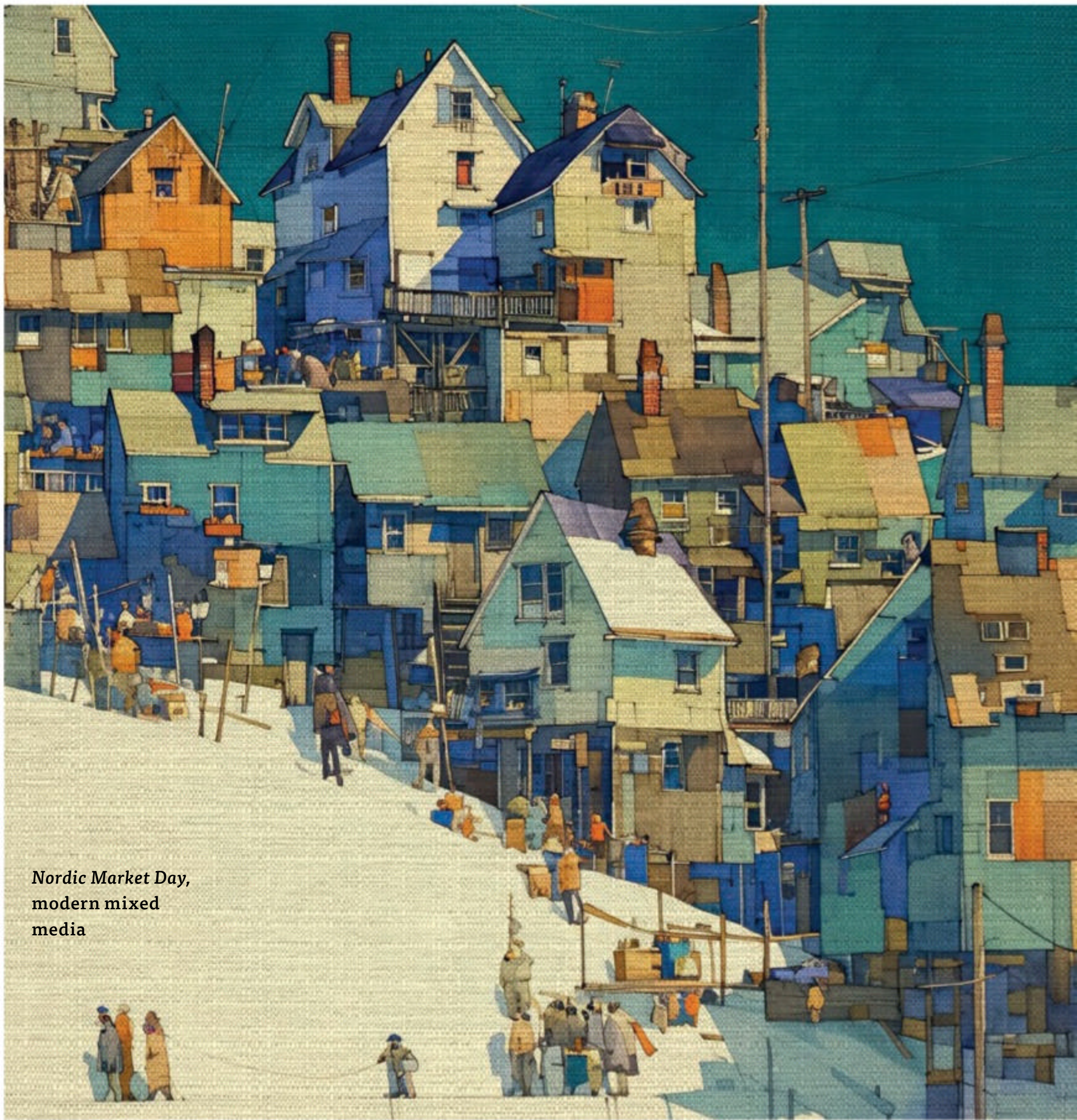
One of the most vivid memories I have is discovering my grandmother's paint kit.
It was in a forgotten corner of her basement. My grandmother was an artist herself, and though I knew she painted, it wasn't until I found her traditional painting kit that I truly understood the magic of it all. It felt like stumbling upon alchemy – there were tubes of paint, bottles of solvents and mediums, rags and a palette, all neatly tucked inside a beautiful pine box with compartments for everything. I was in awe. That paint box inspired me deeply. I still have it and every now and then, I use it. It's a nice connection to my late father's mother, and to the generations of artists who've come before me.

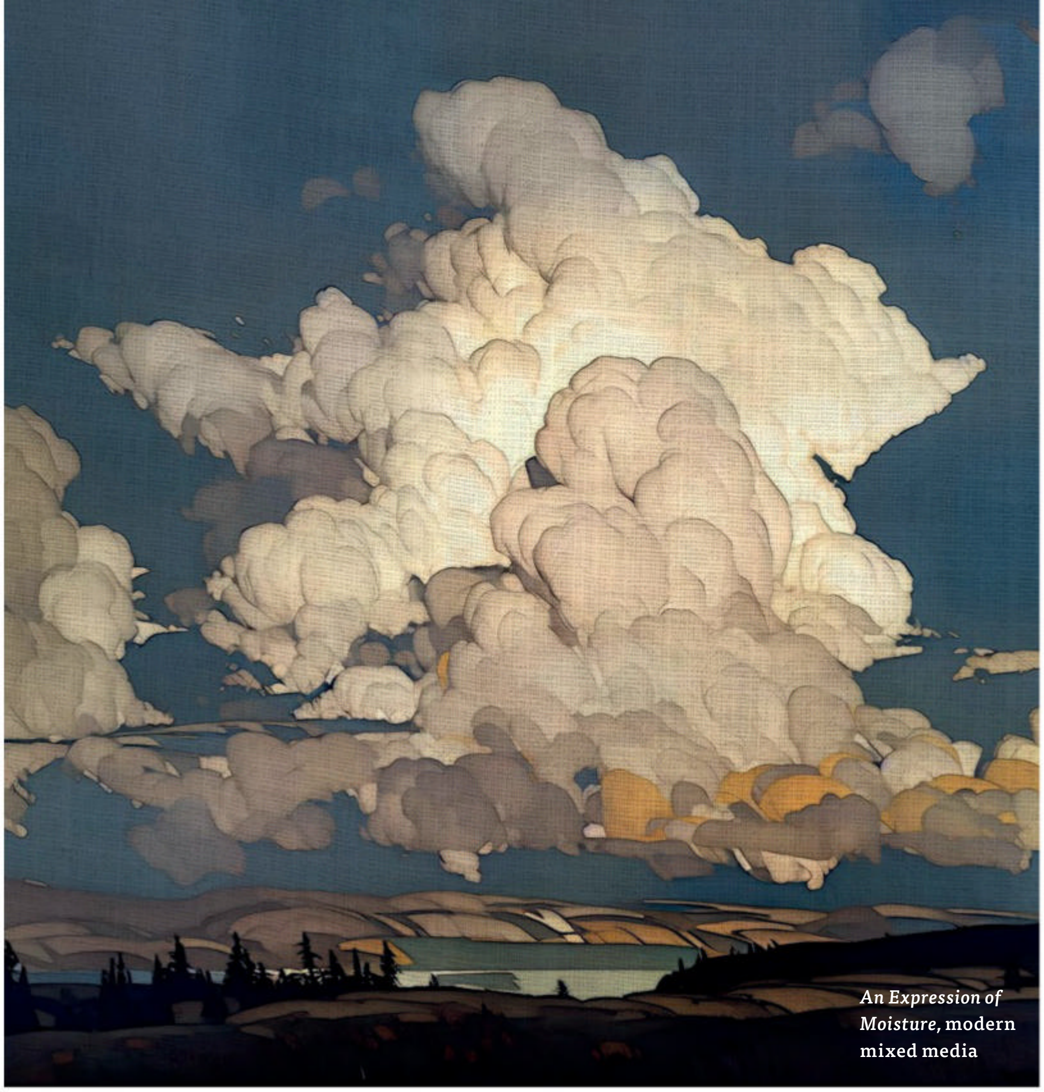
My family was always incredibly supportive from a young age.
I was given free rein to draw and dream about a life as an artist with their support. I grew up attending boarding school during my teenage years, and the support I received from my friends and fellow artists was paramount in shaping who I became.

Many of those friends were also part of an artist collective I worked with.
For the first couple of decades of my career, I travelled widely throughout Canada with the art collective Drawn Onward, painting on site, exhibiting across the country. I even had the honour of showing work to HRH Prince Charles (before he was King) on one occasion. We were also featured in a documentary film titled *Seven Painters Seven Places*. Those early experiences gave me the foundation to explore and grow as an artist.

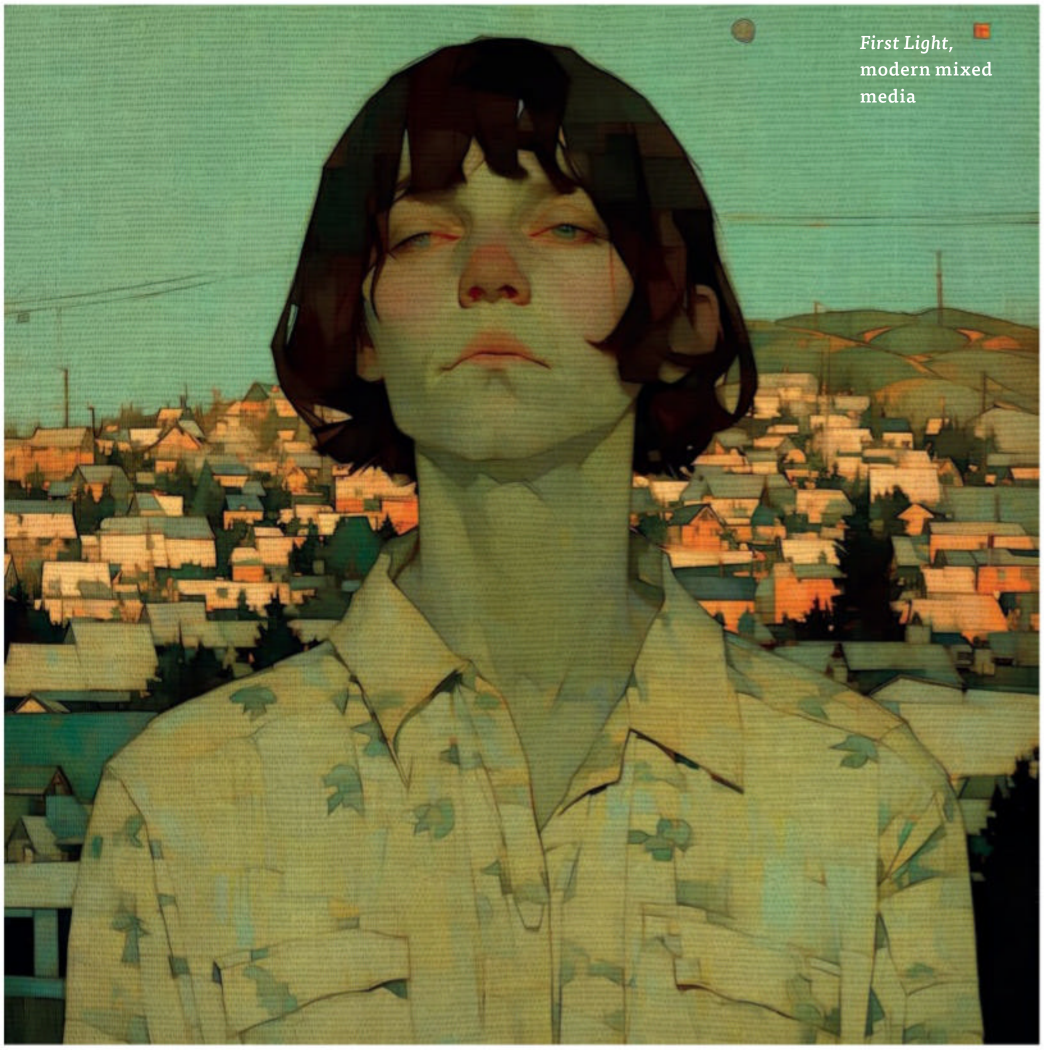
As a young artist, I grew up idolising Canada's Group of Seven painters.
Their landscapes spoke to me in a way I can't quite explain, I guess the same way the landscapes of a place speak to people who come from there. I wanted to learn from them, to emulate their approach and I spent many years immersed in landscape painting.


The 70s Vibe, **modern mixed media**


Nordic Market Day, **modern mixed media**



An Expression of Moisture, modern mixed media



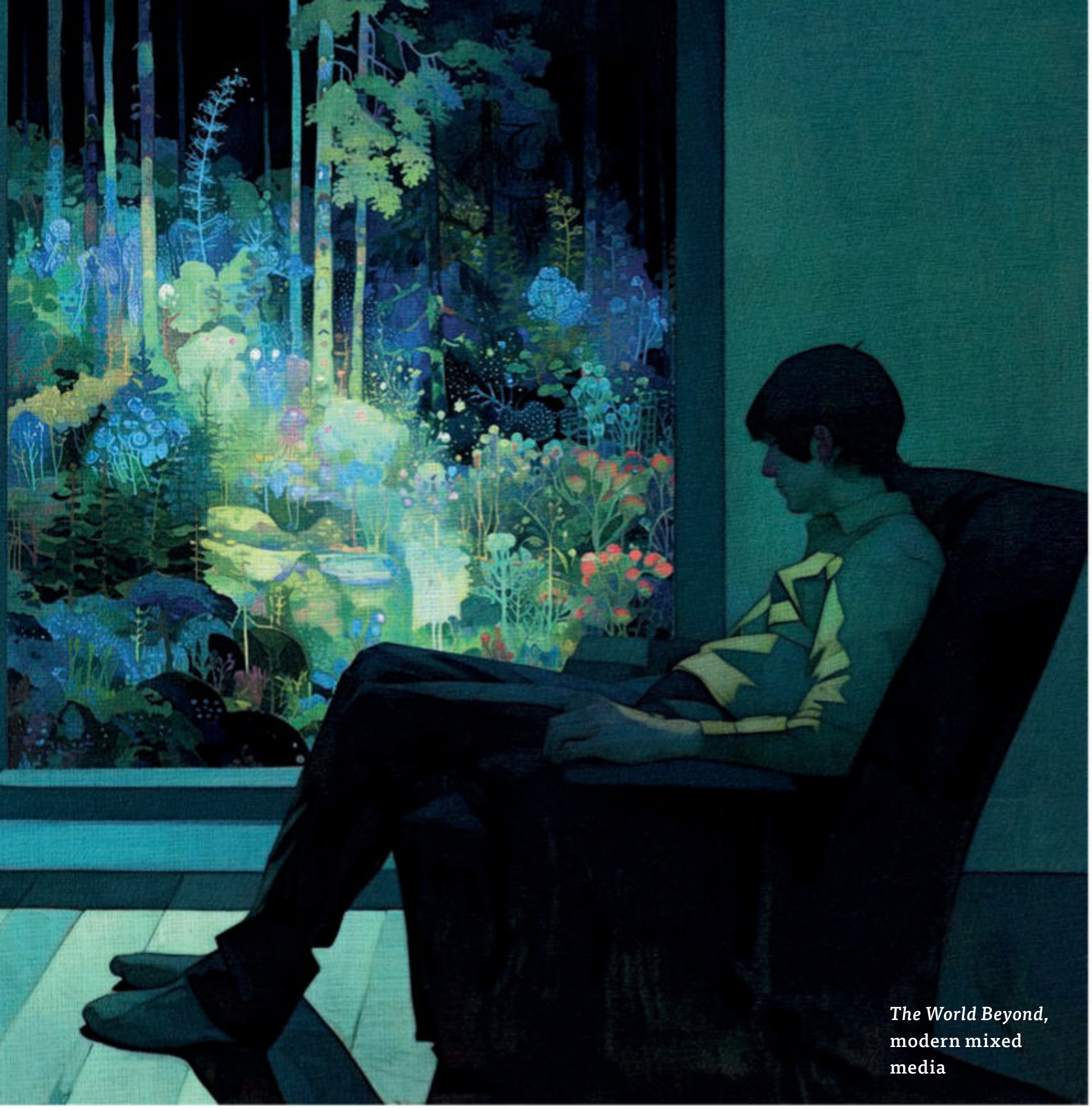
First Light, modern mixed media

Spending two decades painting *en plein air* is one of the best practices any artist can have.
Working from life teaches you so much; how to see form, light, composition, hues, tones and perspective. There's nothing quite like observing the real world to help you understand how to build images from scratch. But perhaps, more importantly, it taught me that images are stories. The places, people and landscapes I depict in my work aren't just arrangements of colour and form; they have histories, purposes and lives of their own.

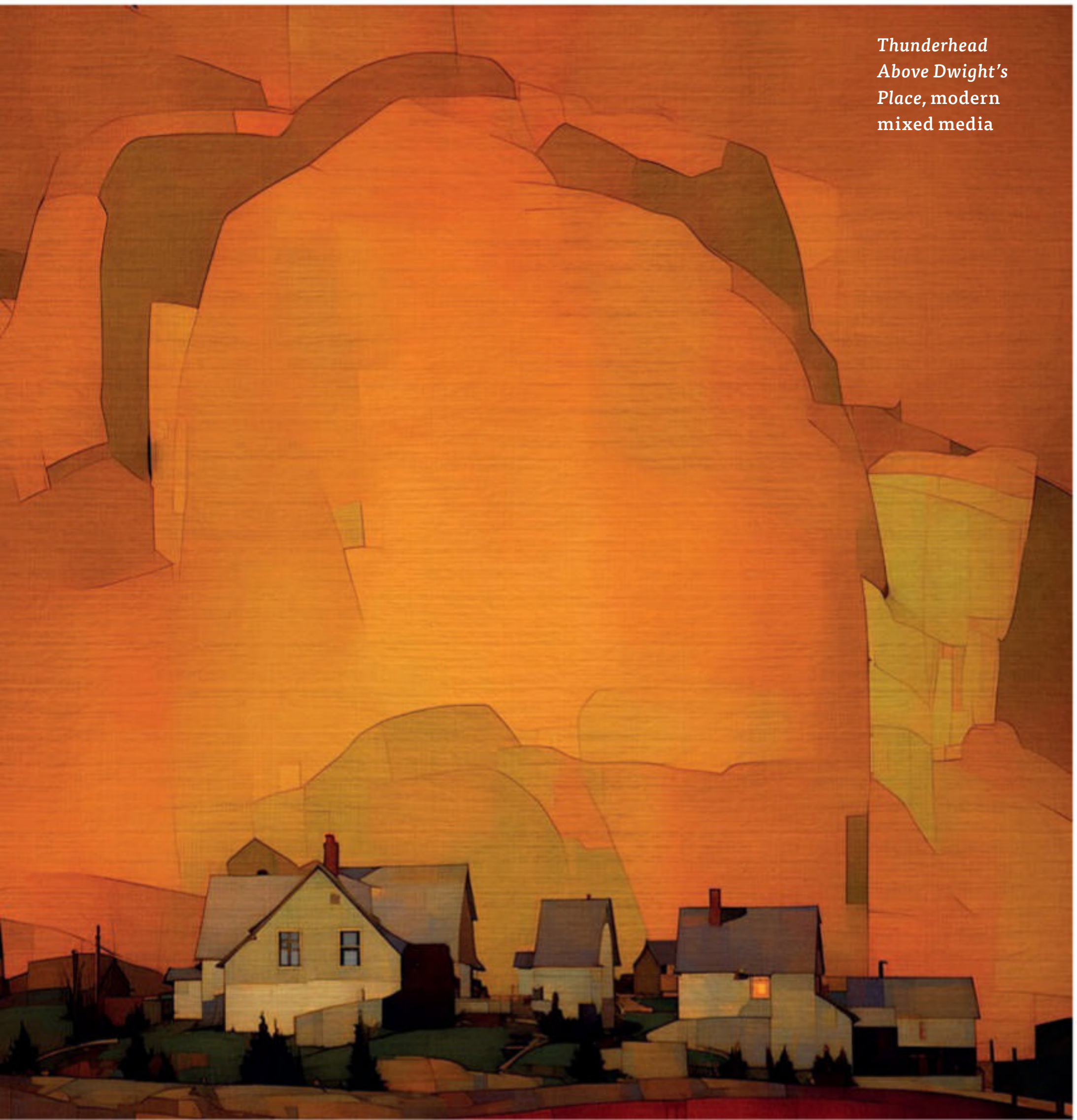
I haven't moved away from landscape painting, but my focus has shifted.
I began to explore different forms of storytelling through art, blending my love for the natural world with my curiosity about architecture, fantasy and eventually technology. Great paintings and illustrations are not just visual successes; they tell stories, ask questions and share something deeper than surface appearance. If you can convey that, you're well on your way to becoming an artist.

Describing my style is like trying to explain why coffee tastes better at sunrise.
It's something you feel more than define. I often refer to it as "escapist realism," combining elements of surreal fantasy with the grounded precision of architecture. Traditional yet new, dreamlike yet grounded. What drew me to this approach was the challenge of creating otherworldly spaces that still felt plausible, even inhabitable. I think this blend of the extraordinary with the believable is what helps set me apart. I want viewers to feel like they can step into my worlds, even if they're unsure of the rules.

I wanted to break out of the confines of traditional techniques and materials.
My transition into using more modern tools was a gamble, but it opened doors I hadn't imagined. Embracing artificial intelligence (AI) tools has been both liberating and controversial, especially in traditional art circles. Some see these technologies as disruptive or even threatening, but I view them as just another tool, like a paintbrush or a stylus. At its core, art will always be about the human hand, eye and story. AI just gives us new ways to tell those stories. ▶



The World Beyond, modern mixed media



Thunderhead Above Dwight's Place, modern mixed media

Breaking into high-profile industries has been a series of small breakthroughs than a single defining moment.
There were no trumpets announcing "Congratulations, you've made it!" But my first book for Chronicle Books in San Francisco felt like a turning point. Getting high-profile clients was a mix of timing, building relationships, and – most importantly – staying true to my artistic voice. I wasn't chasing trends; I was creating worlds that felt authentic to me.

The Chronicle Books series was an unexpected journey.
I never expected for these colouring books to resonate with so many people across cultures. Its success lies in how universal the themes of creativity and discovery are, including alternate realities, architecture, nature and machines. People everywhere love a good escape from reality.

My collaboration with Field Notes has been a highlight of my career.
I have four architectural illustrations wrapped around their sketchbook covers. It's always refreshing to see how brands like that embrace artistic experimentation. These partnerships keep things fun and open new creative pathways. More importantly, they allow me to bring my work to audiences who might not stumble upon it otherwise. I love the tactile nature of creating something like a sketchbook – there's still something magical about putting pencil to paper.

Being a best-selling author has opened some surprising doors.
I didn't realise how much that label changes people's perception of you. Suddenly, people who wouldn't have returned my emails are asking me for advice! But in all seriousness, it has allowed me to take on projects that I'm passionate about without overly worrying about the financial viability (my wonderful partner also helps). It hasn't changed my approach to the work, though; I still focus on the same core values: storytelling, emotion and connection.

Teaching has been a two-way street.
Every time I teach, I end up learning something new myself. I hope my students take away a sense that art is about exploration, not perfection. I want them to feel empowered to break rules, push boundaries and – most importantly – trust their instincts. If I can teach them that art isn't about a right or wrong way, but *their* way, then I've done my job. ◻

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31 Mar–4 Apr, 10am–5pm

Explore parenting through visual storytelling, combining art, literature, and live model sessions to create meaningful and personal narratives.
Online, £440

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Explore portrait drawing using various materials and techniques, inspired by artists like Van Gogh, Freud, and Hockney.
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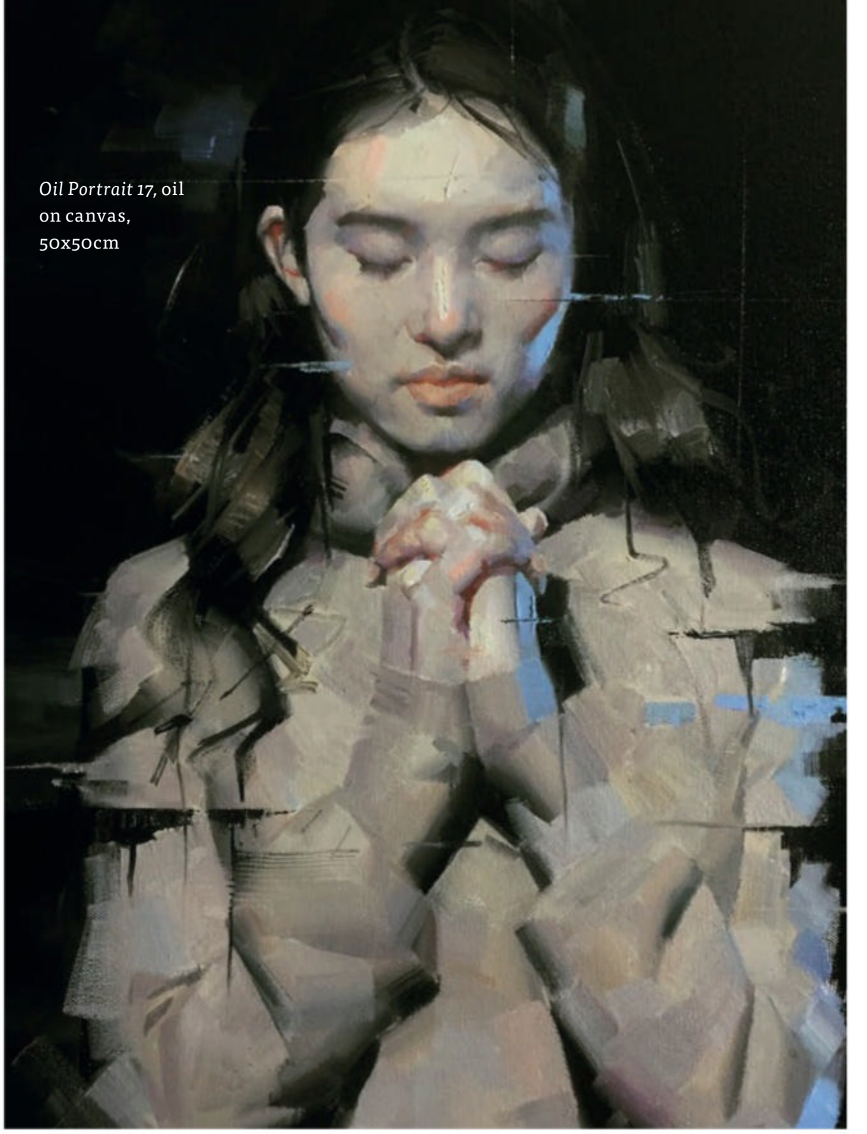
Jie Gao

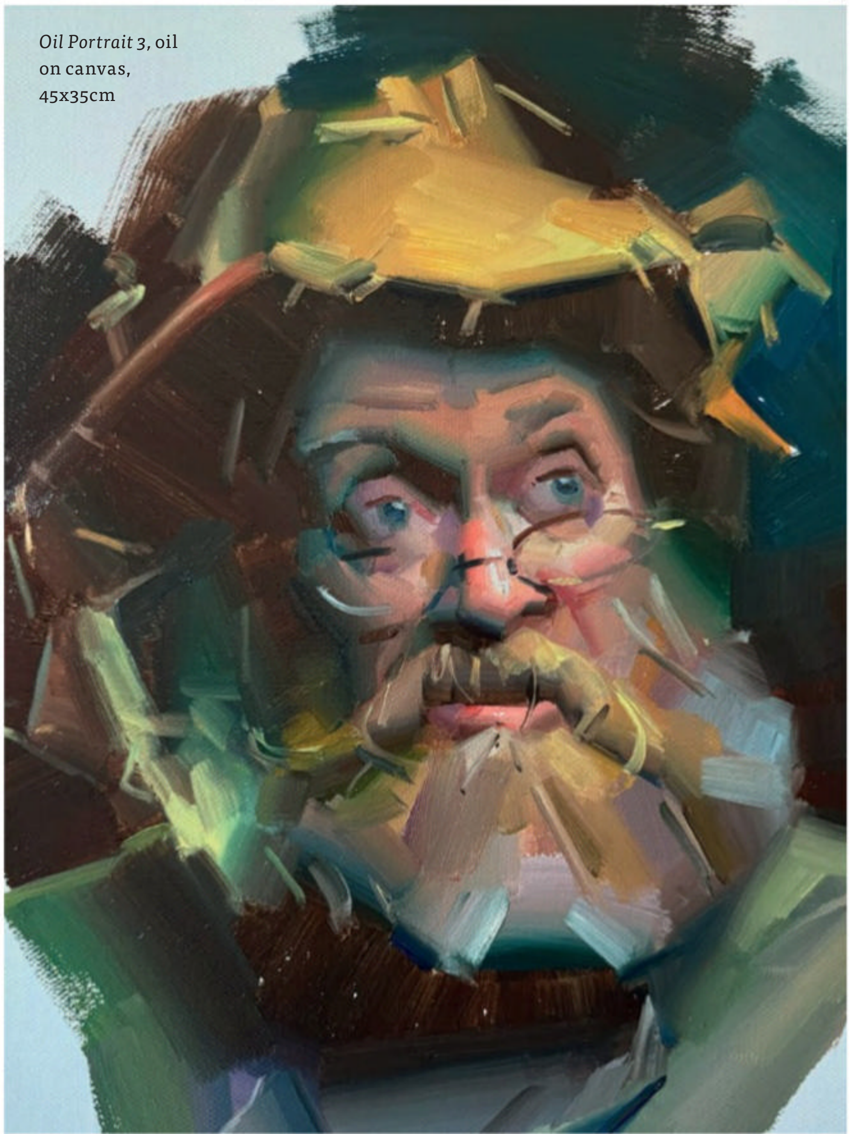
This artist is also an Art Director at a gaming company, and his skill as a painter gives him the edge in his day job. *Niki Browes* finds out more

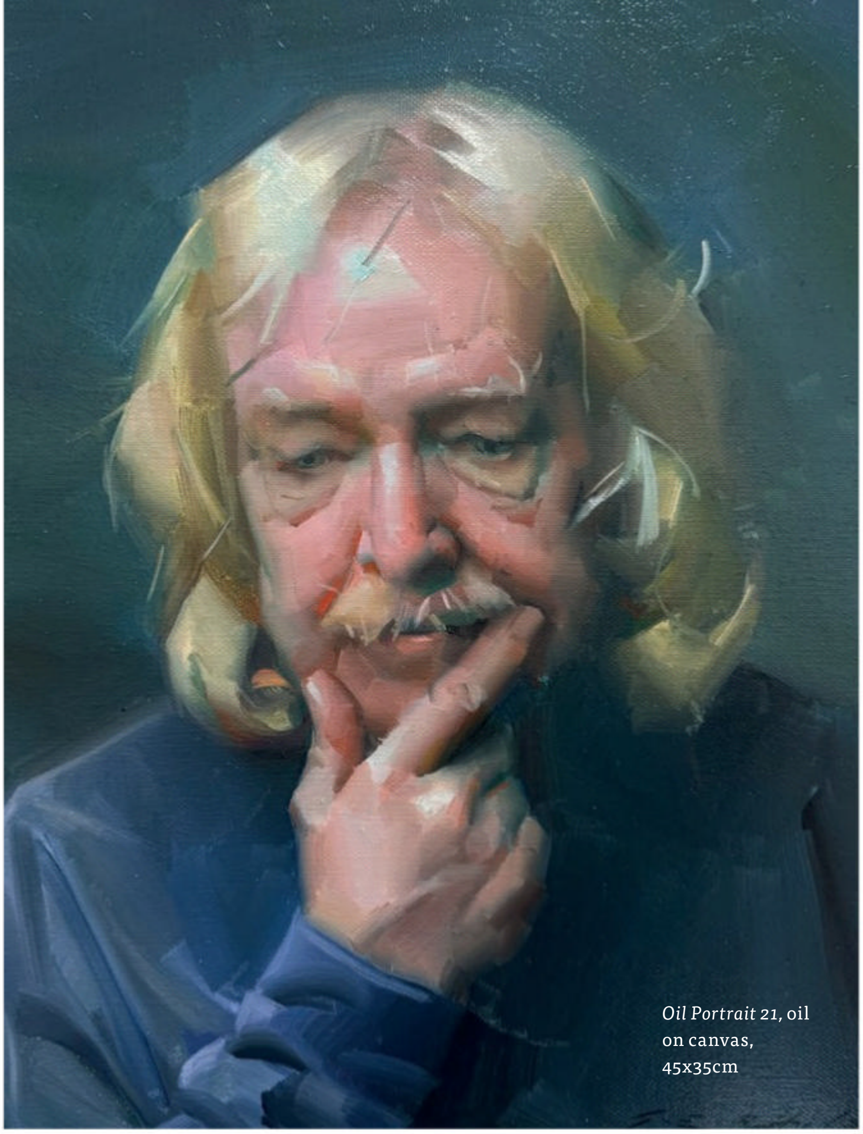
A CURIOUS AND CREATIVE CHILD, Beijing artist Jie Gao remembers being glued to the TV, captivated by traditional Chinese cartoons and American Disney animations. Soon, he realised it was the art design that fascinated him, and he began to imitate the moving pictures with his own creations. Recognising his budding talent and in a bid to nurture it, his father, a painter and one-time art teacher, sent him to a local art tutor where he learned the basic theory and practice of drawing. Later, he went on to study fashion design. But a brief stint working in the industry failed to quash his instinctive desire to paint. So, he upped sticks to the States to study oil painting and gaming design, obtaining a masters in both fields.

Today, he holds the unique position as the Art Director at a large gaming company whilst also being a prolific oil and charcoal painter who has held sell-out exhibitions in San Francisco, Moscow and Beijing. Meanwhile, his expertise in painting, concept art, character animation and game design has earned him worldwide acclaim in both fields.

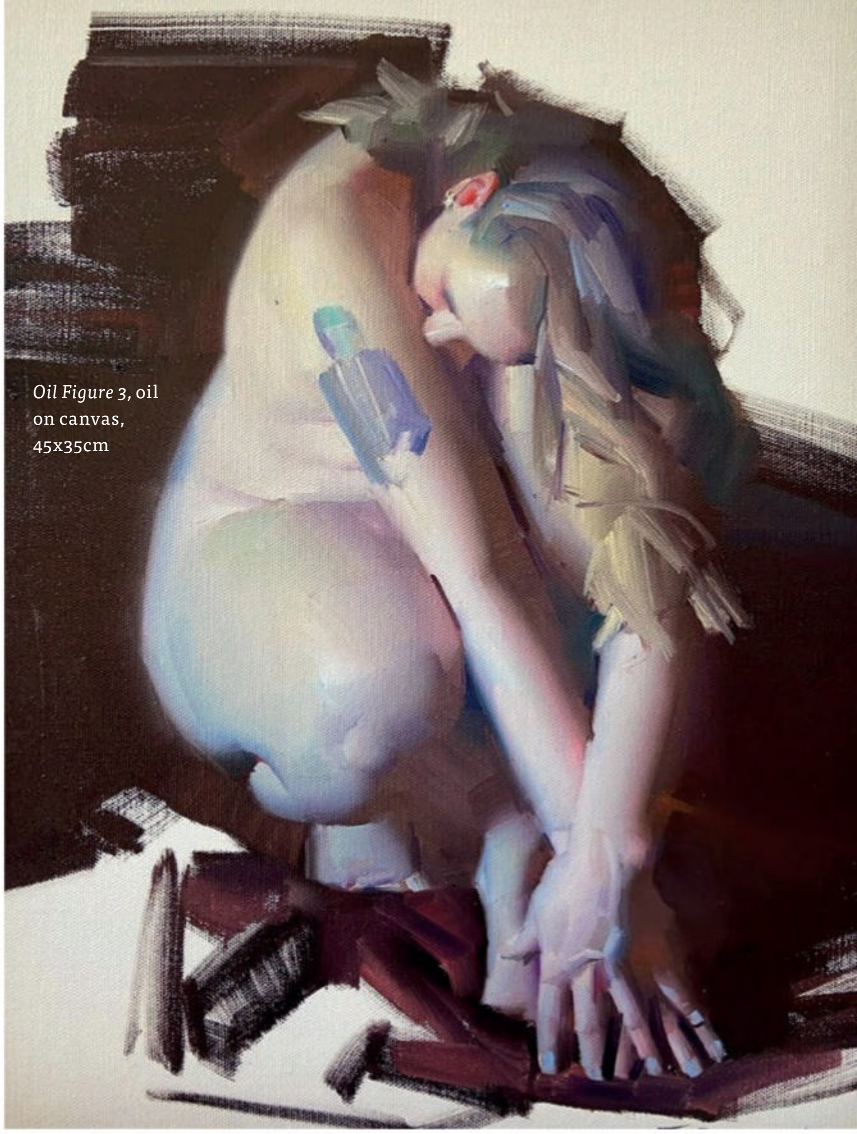
jiegaoart.com ▶


Oil Portrait 17, oil on canvas, 50x50cm

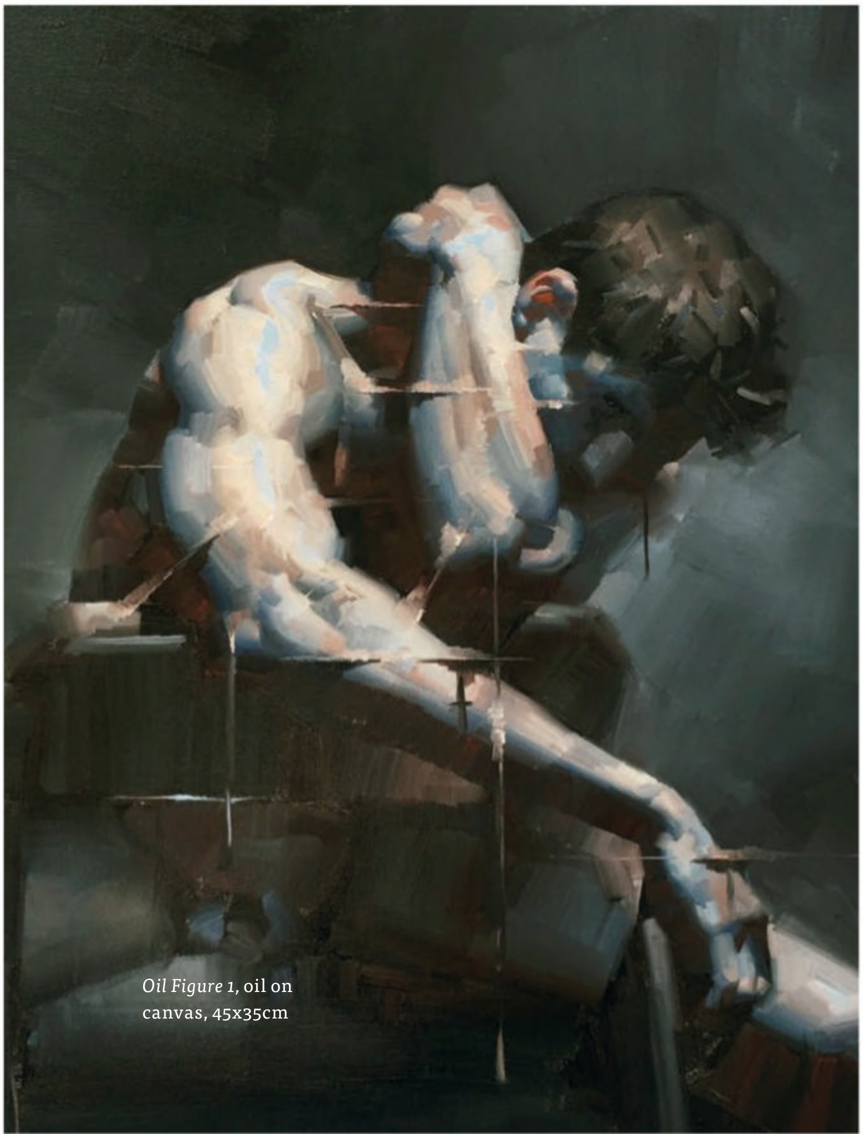

Oil Portrait 3, oil on canvas, 45x35cm



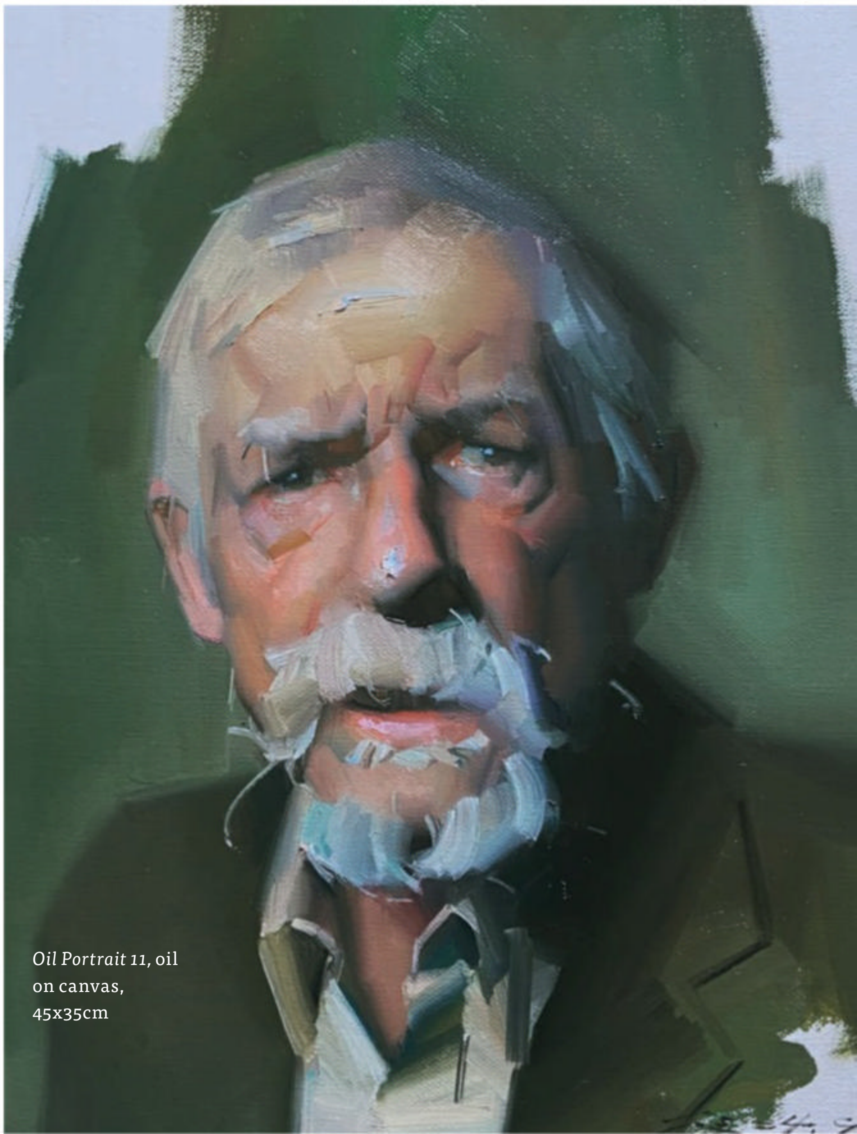
Oil Portrait 21, oil on canvas, 45x35cm



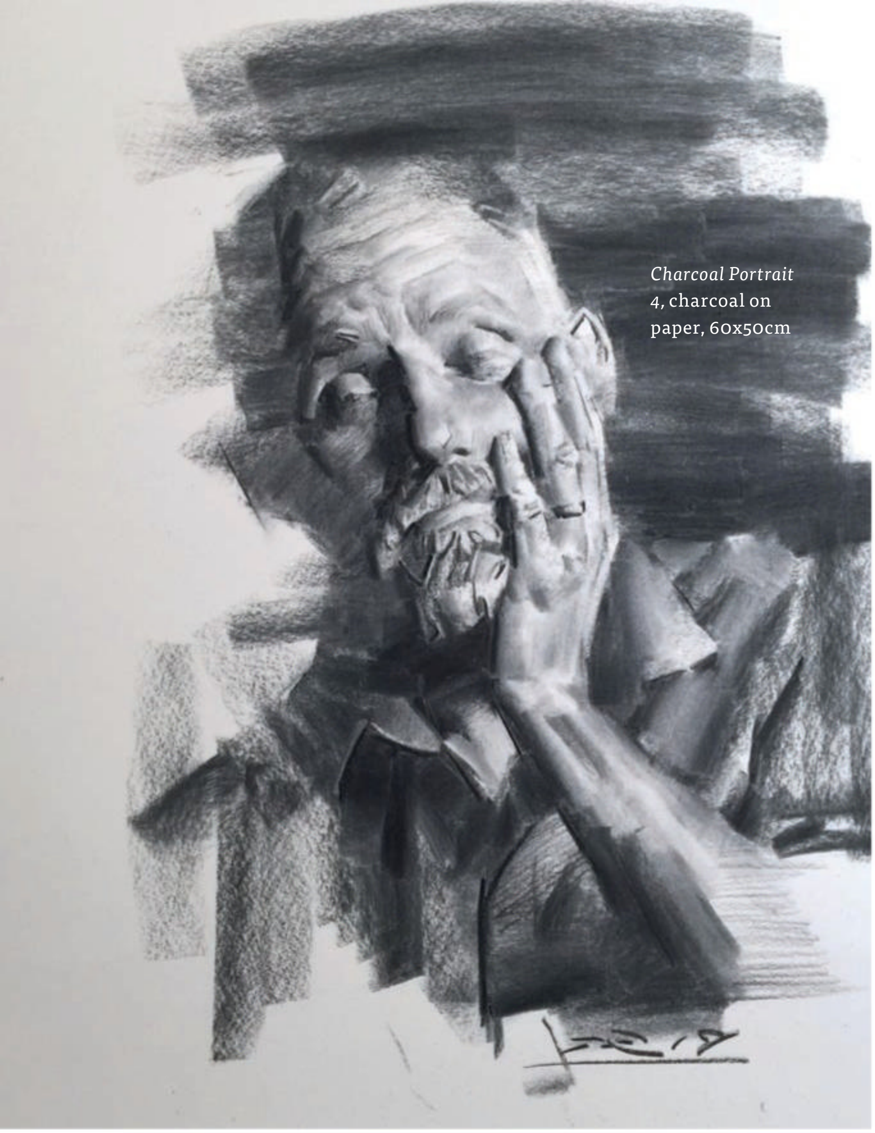
Oil Figure 3, oil on canvas, 45x35cm



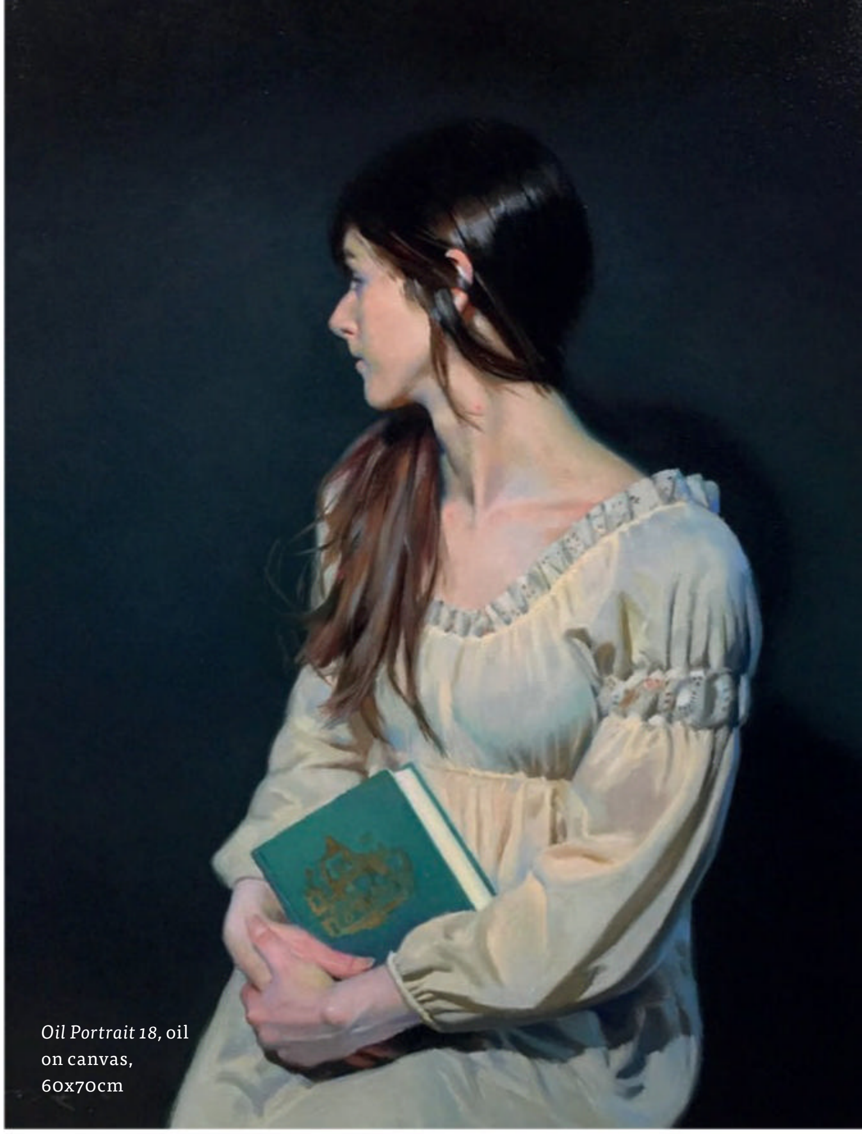
Oil Figure 1, oil on canvas, 45x35cm



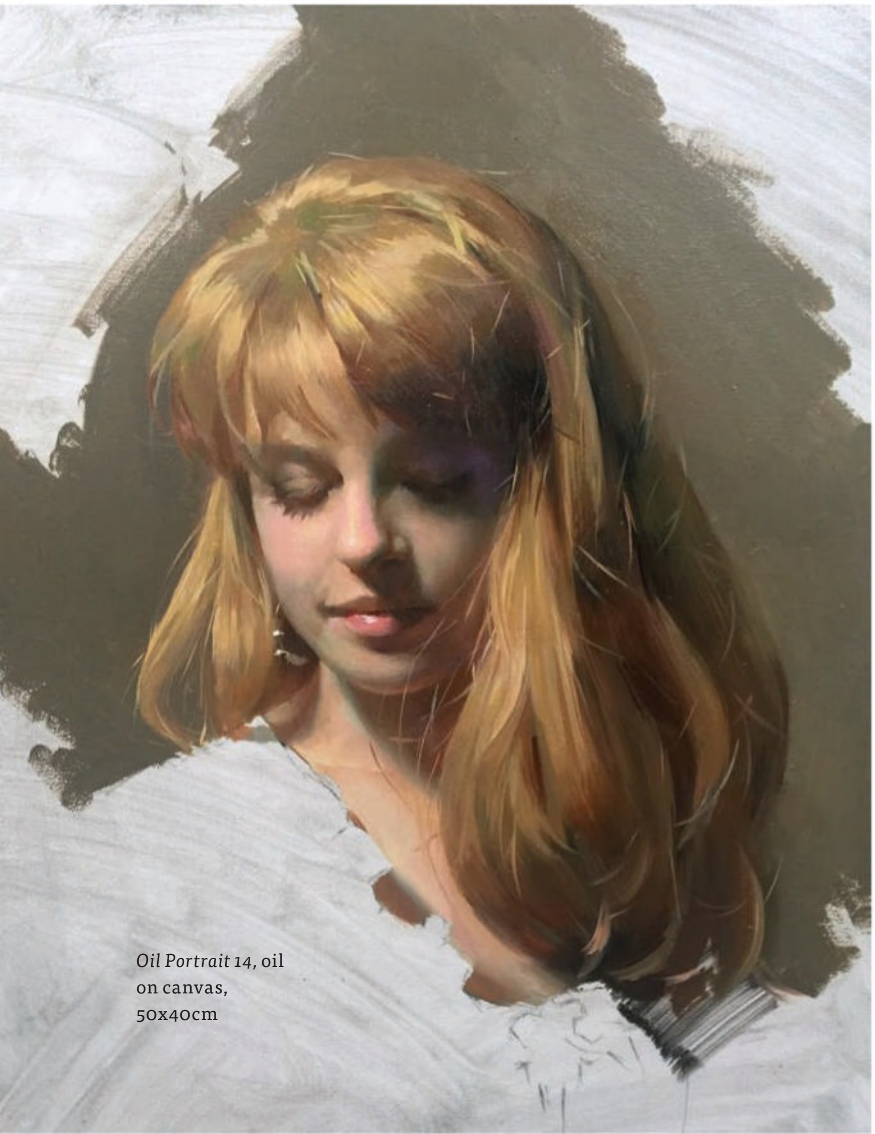
Oil Portrait 11, oil on canvas, 45x35cm



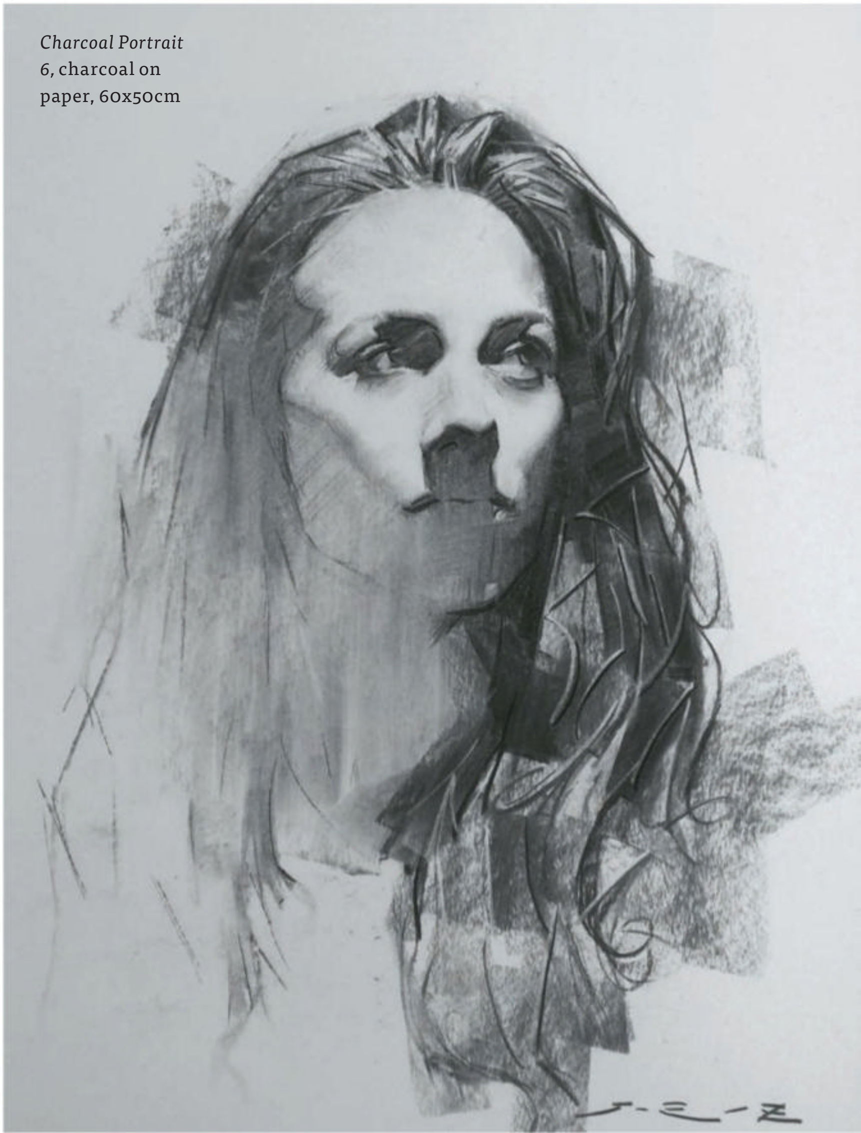
Charcoal Portrait 4, charcoal on paper, 60x50cm



Oil Portrait 18, oil on canvas, 60x70cm



Oil Portrait 14, oil on canvas, 50x40cm



Charcoal Portrait 6, charcoal on paper, 60x50cm

Oil and charcoal are my painting mediums of choice.
I love the thick texture of oil painting and am fascinated by the mechanism of paint forming on the canvas. In addition, oil paintings can be preserved for hundreds of years, which is also appealing. Then, compared with pencils and other tools, I think charcoal can express and create my ideas more efficiently, quickly and freely.

I use the direct painting method, and the process of creating an oil painting is divided into the preparation stage and the painting stage.
The preparation stage includes the creation of creative ideas and material preparation, including hiring models, setting the scene, lighting and preparing props. This stage usually takes several weeks to complete and includes observation and feeling. Depending on the techniques I use, I usually finish a work within a week before the oil paint dries.

Where possible, I like to paint from life, but this requires hiring models for a long time, which is a more complex process.
More often, I hire several models at once and take a large number of photos for future paintings. Occasionally I buy photographs of people from other photographers and create paintings based on what they've shot.

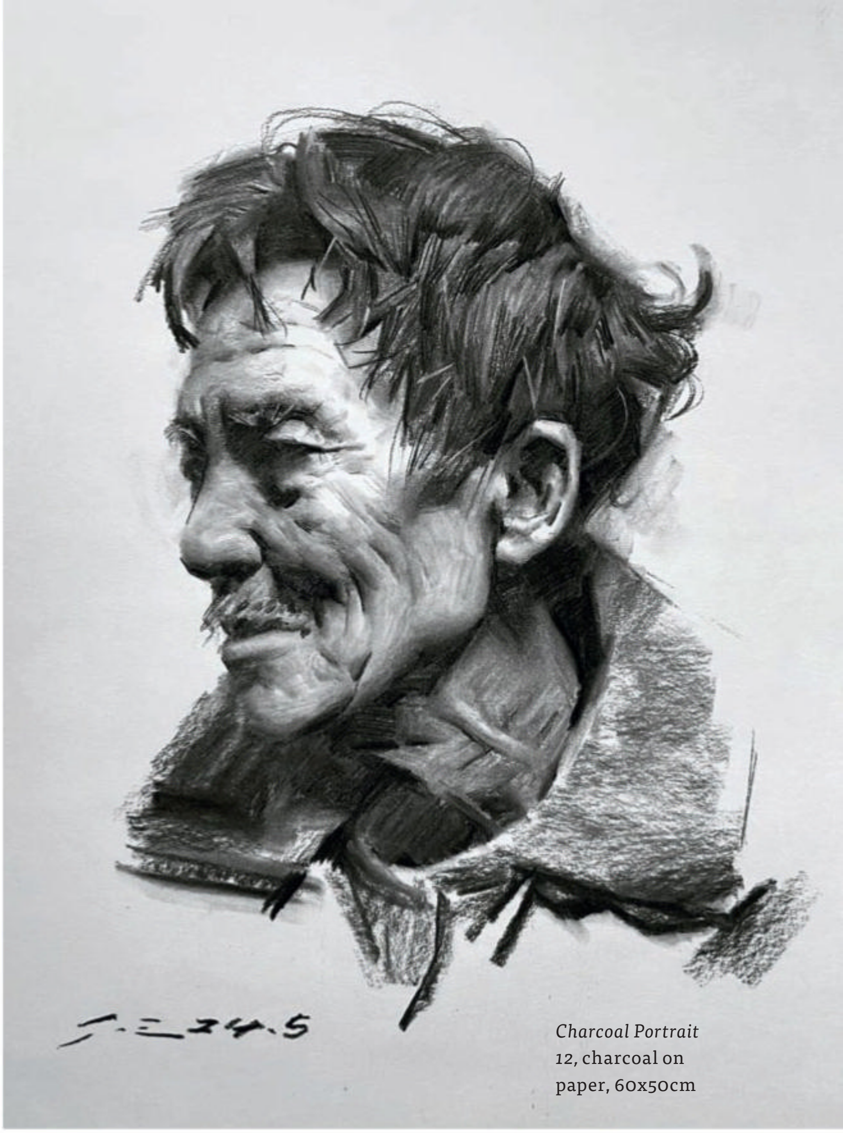
I prefer a confident and assertive mode of expression in my paintings.
I don't like simply replicating or copying objects. Instead, I focus on observing and feeling, clearly identifying what I want to emphasise and express. In terms of technique, I use broad brushstrokes to summarise and refine the depicted subjects whilst accurately conveying space and form through the interplay of solid and void areas and edge control is crucial. Additionally, preserving lively and interesting brushwork is something I value highly.

I'm drawn to painting the elderly.
I like to capture the sense of life and the stories on their faces, which usually contain a large number of complex details. I enjoy simplifying and generalising these details into my own painting language. Compared with the traditional facial expressions of characters you often see in paintings, I also like to capture moments of interest – surprise, joy, wonder and curiosity, for instance. I am very excited to be able to capture these wonderful moments and am constantly fascinated by people's faces.

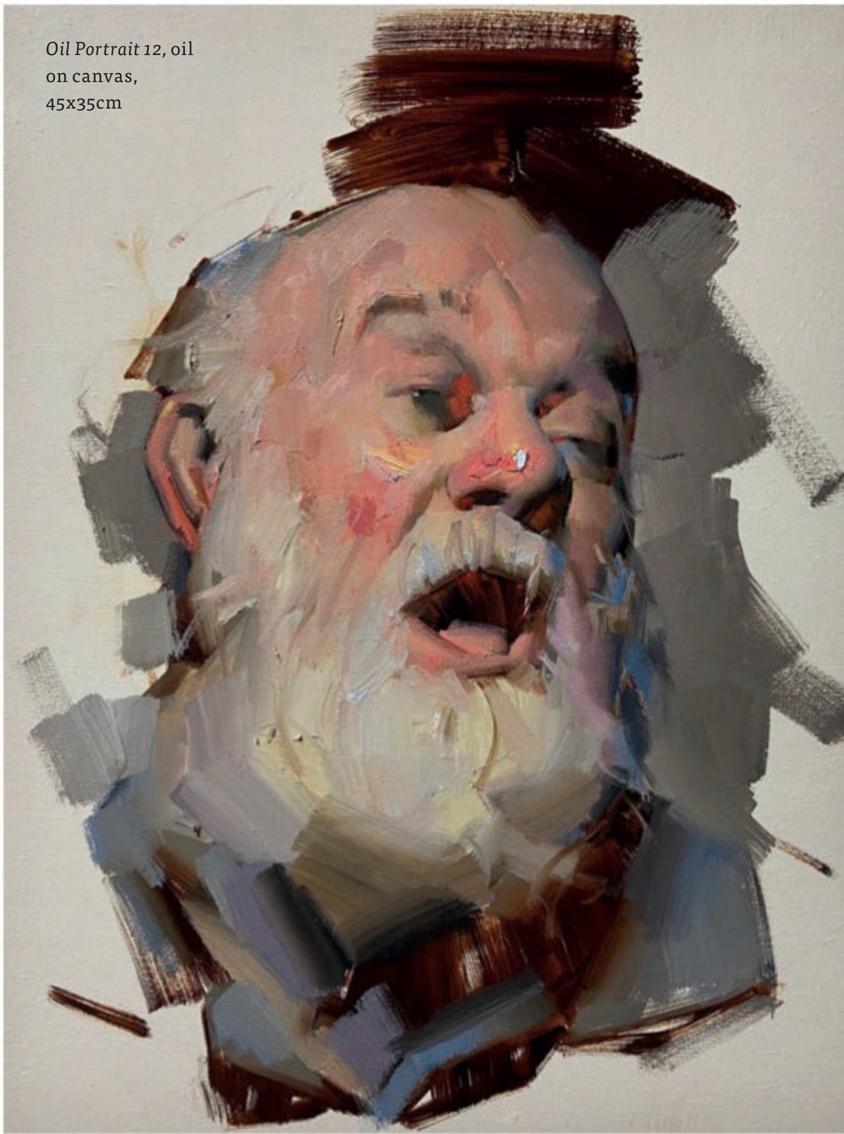
Part of my income comes from being an Art Director in the gaming industry so, most of the time, I don't feel the pressure to make money from painting.
This means it doesn't feel like a burden to me, that I can truly express my thoughts and inspirations and I don't often get into creative ruts. I am more worried that, one day as I grow older, I might lose my passion and inspiration and will have to rely solely on experience to paint.

Traditional painting and art have had a huge impact on my creativity in game design.
This practice has given me a different perspective from others in the field. Analysing and solving picture and visual problems also starts from the underlying logic of art. This makes me stand out from others in the industry of game design, and to some extent has become an advantage for me.

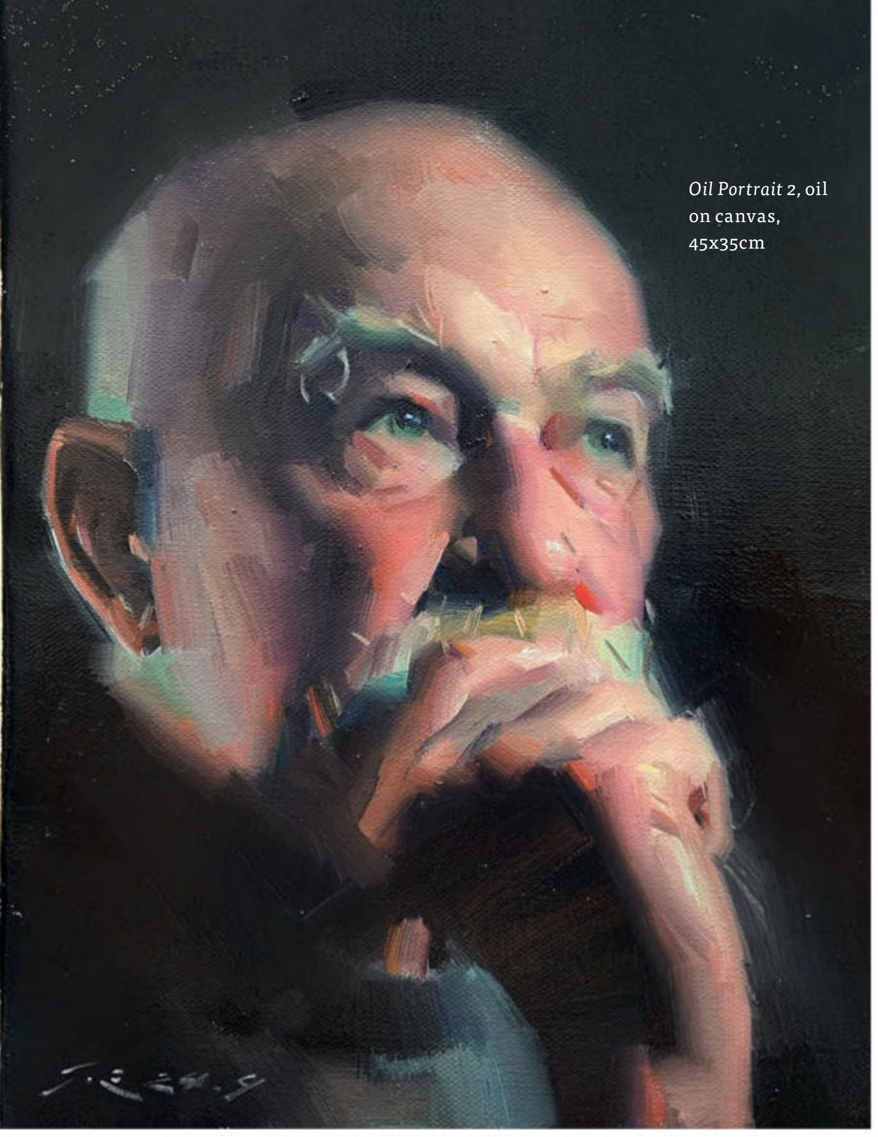
I have my own studio, which is about 80 square metres ▸.



Charcoal Portrait 12, charcoal on paper, 60x50cm



Oil Portrait 12, oil on canvas, 45x35cm

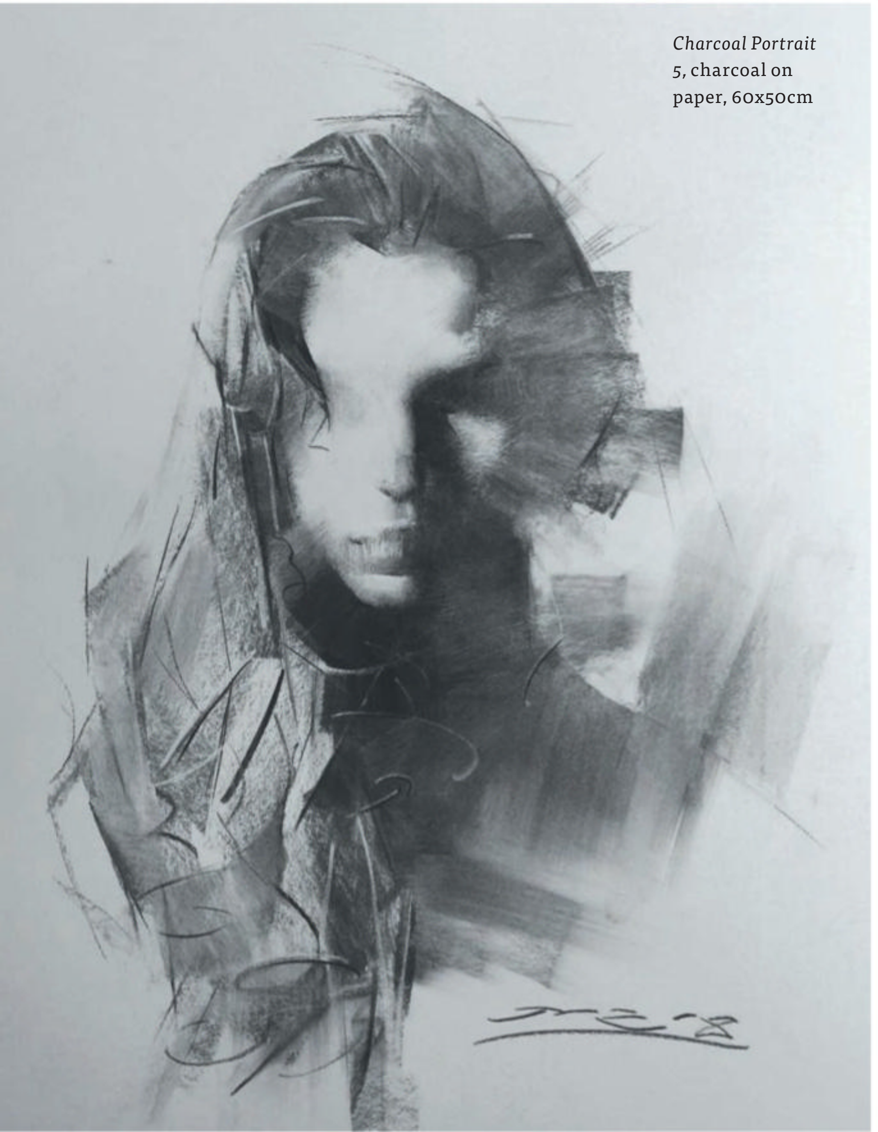


Oil Portrait 2, oil on canvas, 45x35cm

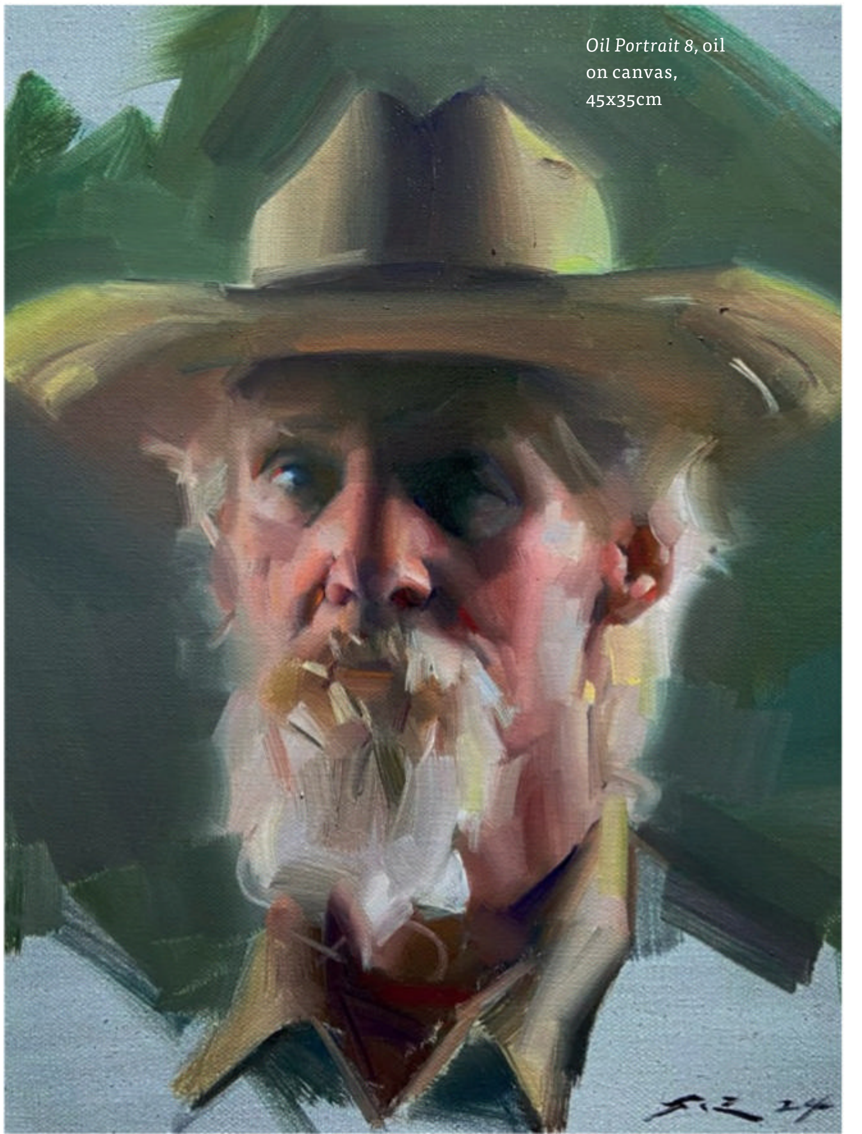
The space is not very large, but it can fully meet my creative requirements. Having a good sleep at night is very important for me and, because lighting can affect colour accuracy, I mostly paint oil paintings during the day. Additionally, like most people, I have better energy and focus during the day. In the evenings, I usually tend to focus on charcoal drawing.

Social media is a platform and bridge for me to communicate with people who love art around the world, and I enjoy this process.
It brings me many opportunities, such as commissions, exhibitions and interviews. In addition to portraits, I also paint some human figures and, occasionally, landscapes. But there are two main reasons why viewers see mostly portraits on my social media. Firstly, human body works are not allowed to be published on most social platforms, and secondly, I hope to maintain a consistent rhythm to sustain engagement. The creative pace of portraits is more suitable for posting on social media.

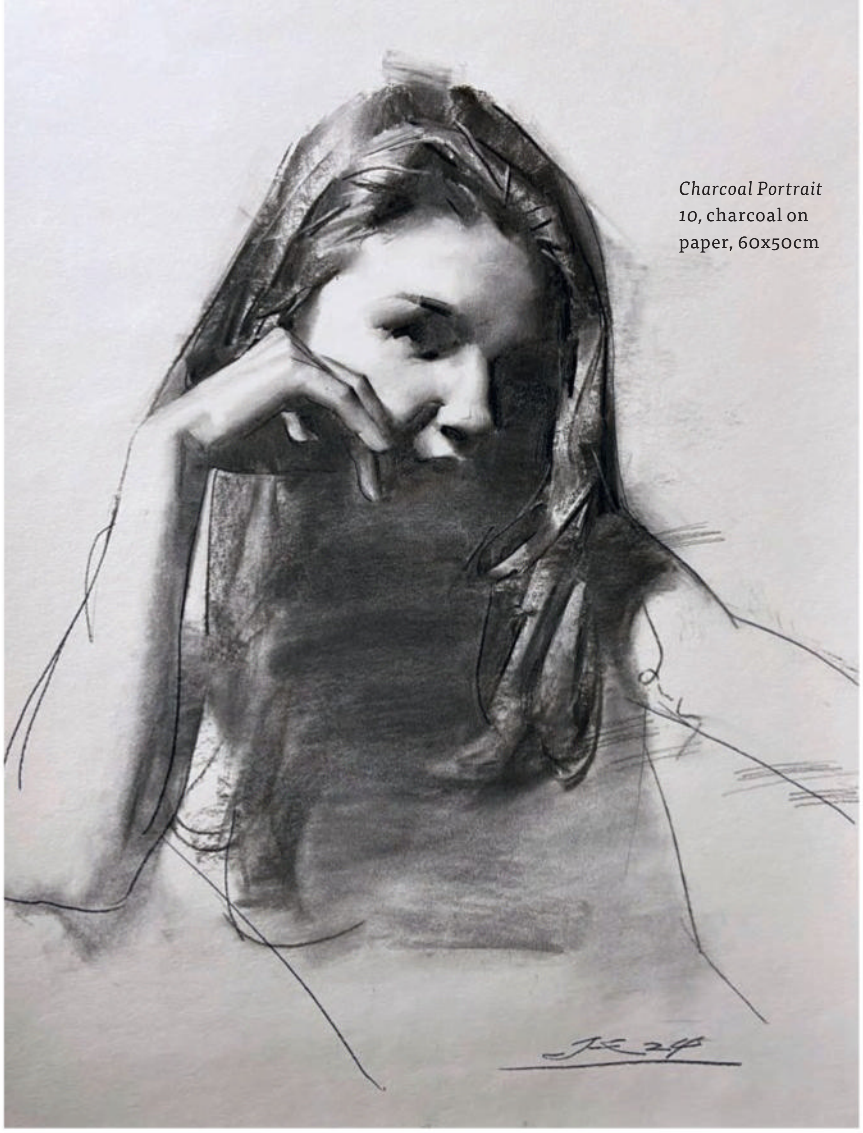
I am an ordinary person but the best thing about what I do is that I can support my family with my artwork while freely expressing my thoughts and perception of the world through it.
Additionally, I receive many messages from budding artists every day from all over the world, telling me that they have picked up their brushes again or found new inspiration after seeing my works. When they lose their direction in their art studies, I want them to remember my works and be re-inspired to find a new path forward. I hope this positive impact, along with my oil and charcoal painting, will continue until the day I can no longer hold a brush. ◻



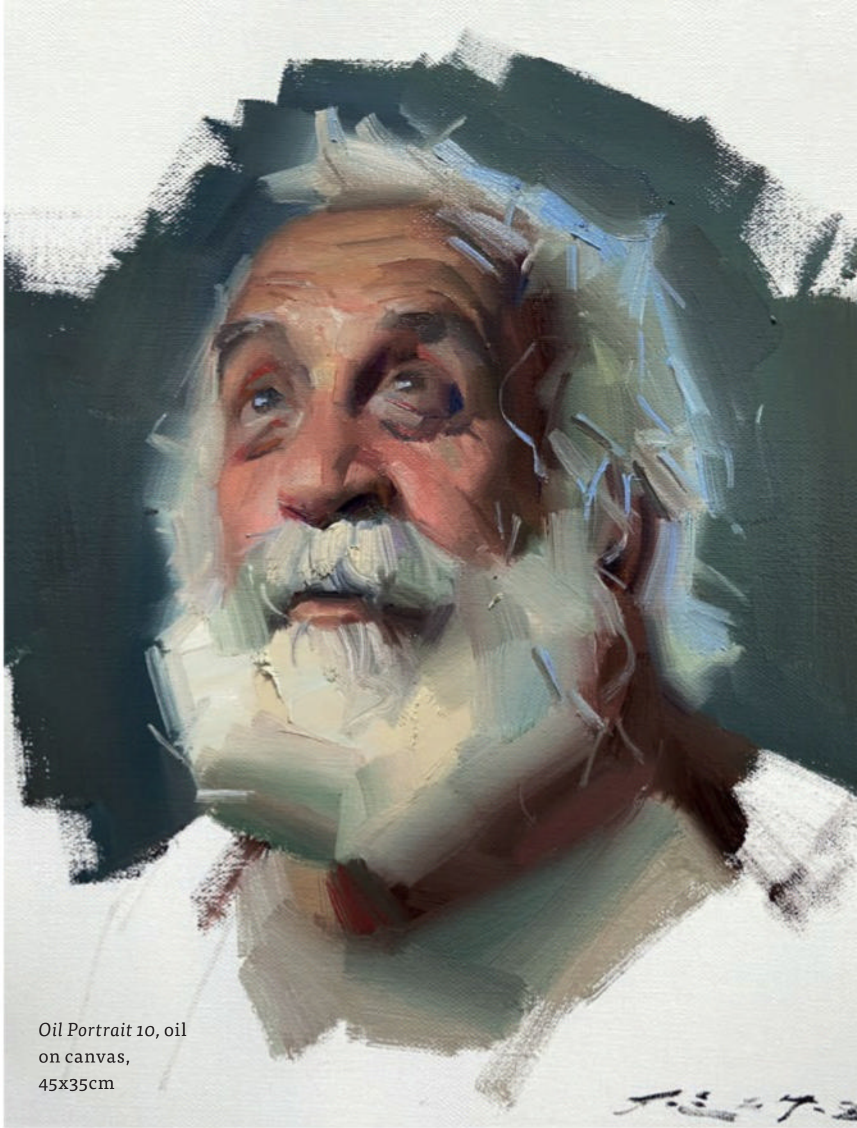
Charcoal Portrait 5, charcoal on paper, 60x50cm



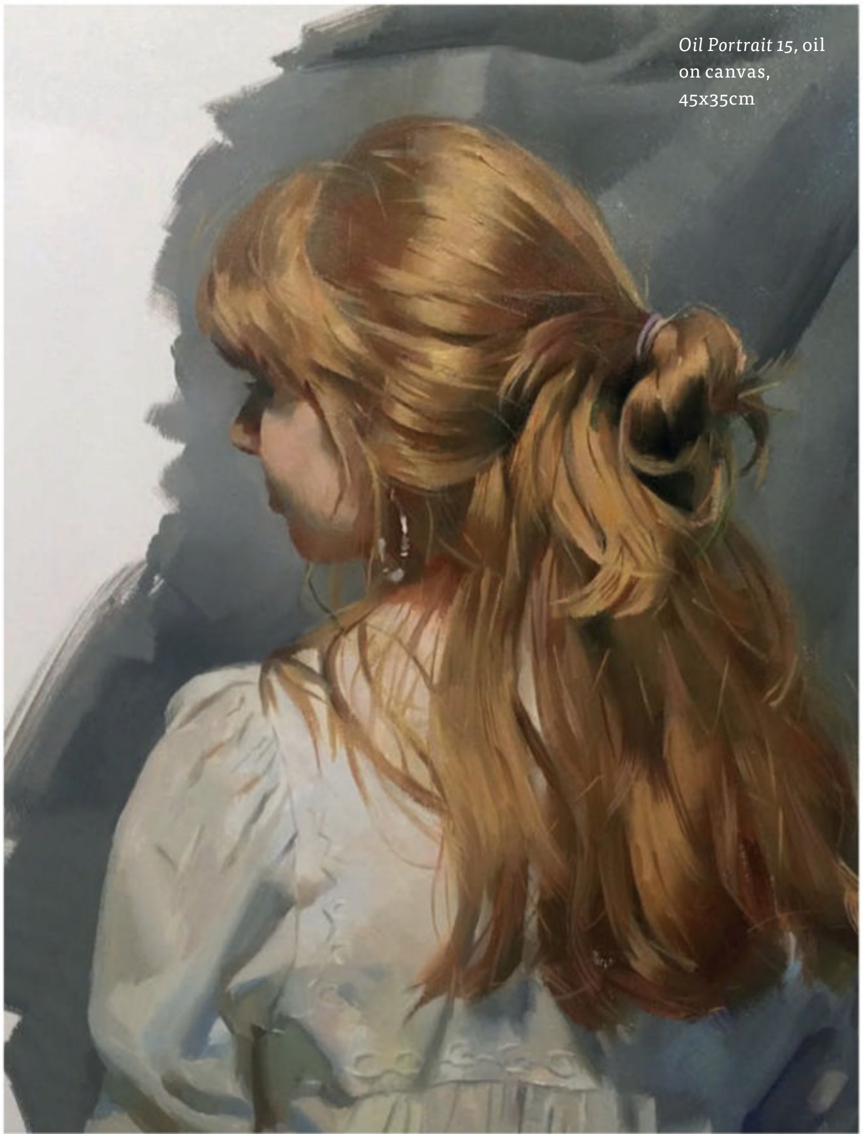
Oil Portrait 8, oil on canvas, 45x35cm



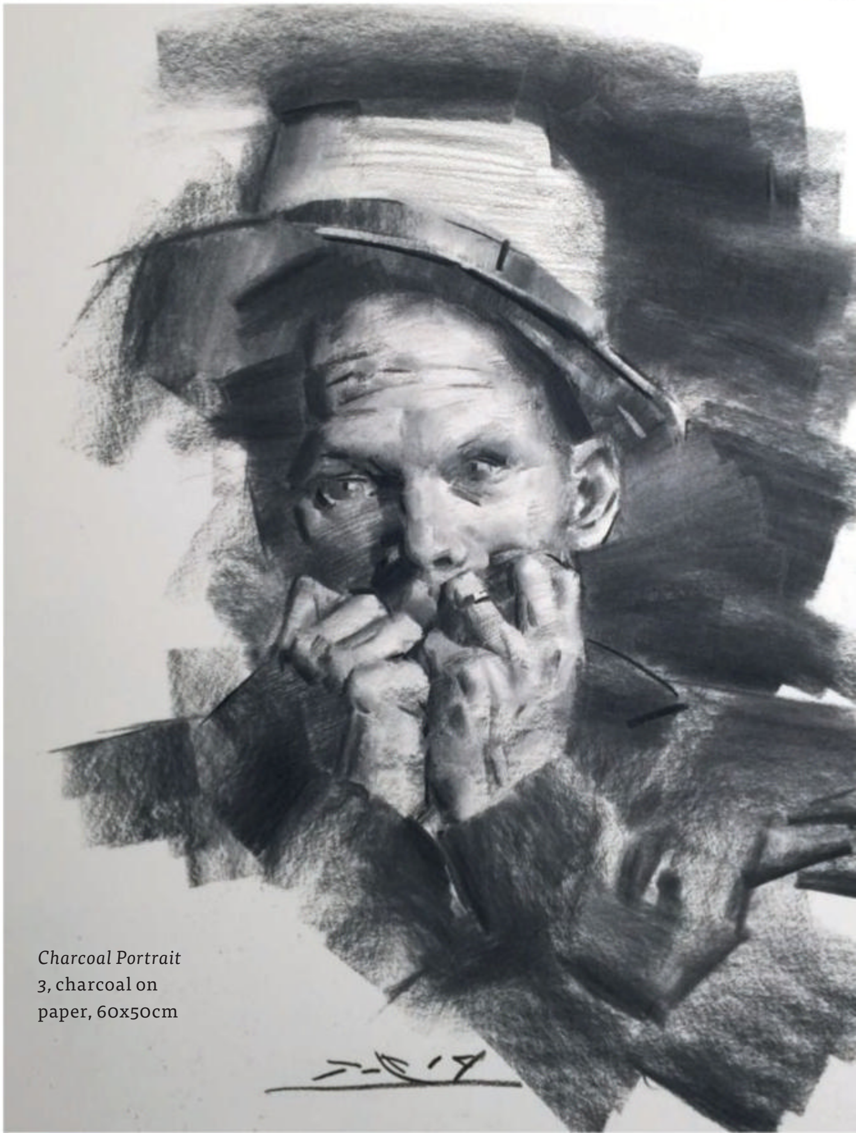
Charcoal Portrait 10, charcoal on paper, 60x50cm



Oil Portrait 10, oil on canvas, 45x35cm



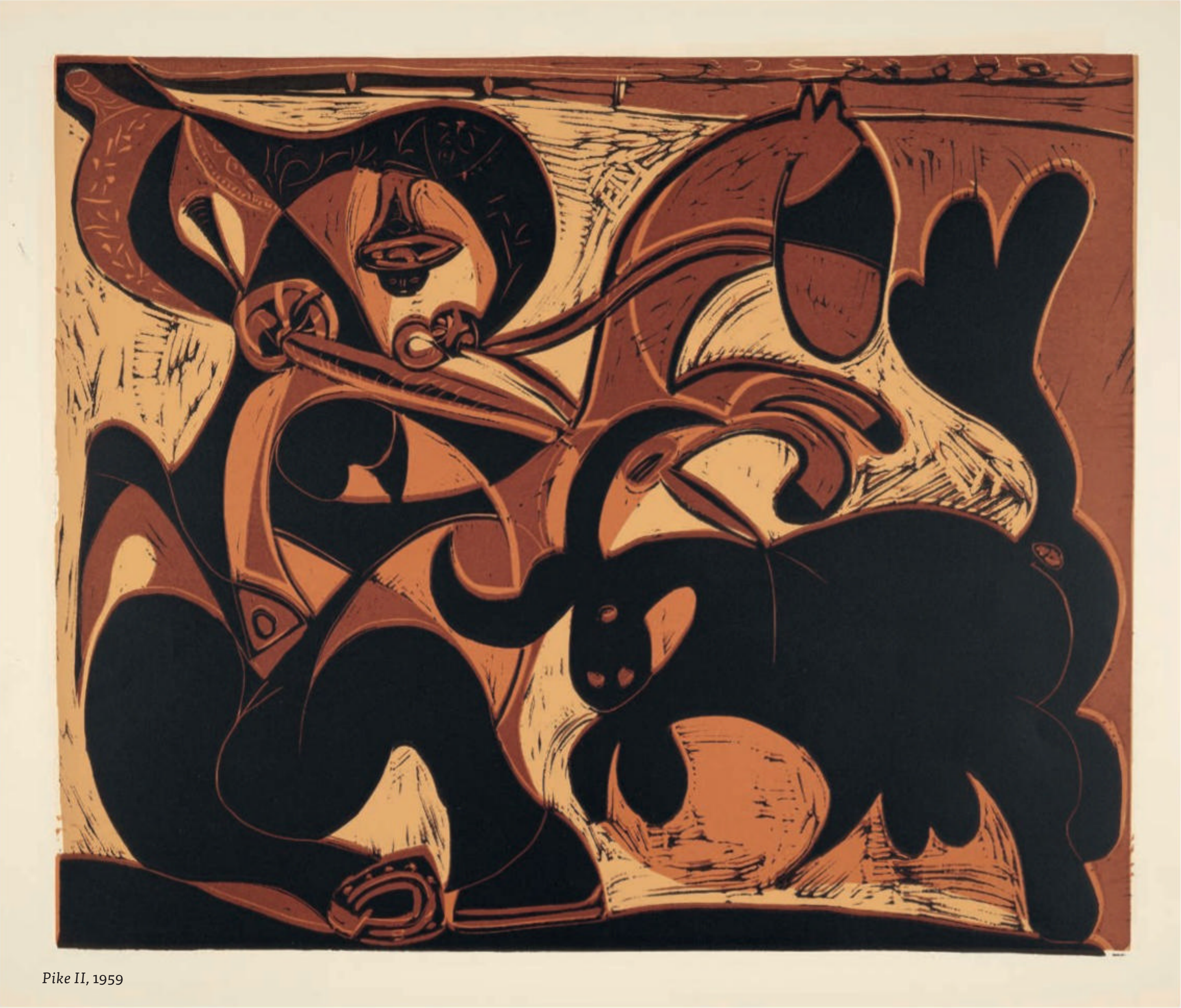
Oil Portrait 15, oil on canvas, 45x35cm



Charcoal Portrait 3, charcoal on paper, 60x50cm

Picasso Printmaker

A new exhibition at the British Museum reveals Pablo Picasso as a prolific printmaker.
Amanda Hodges finds out more ▶



Pike II, 1959

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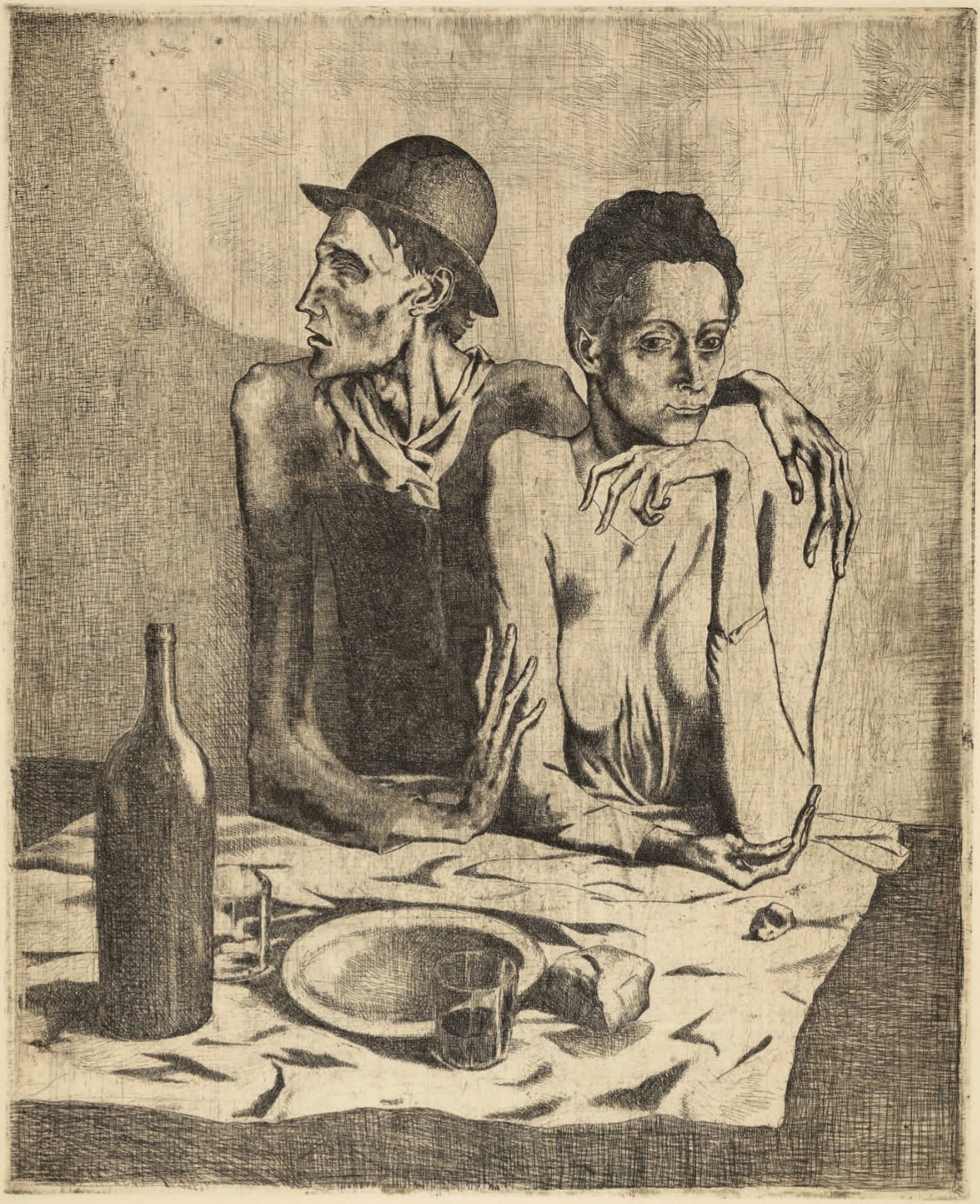
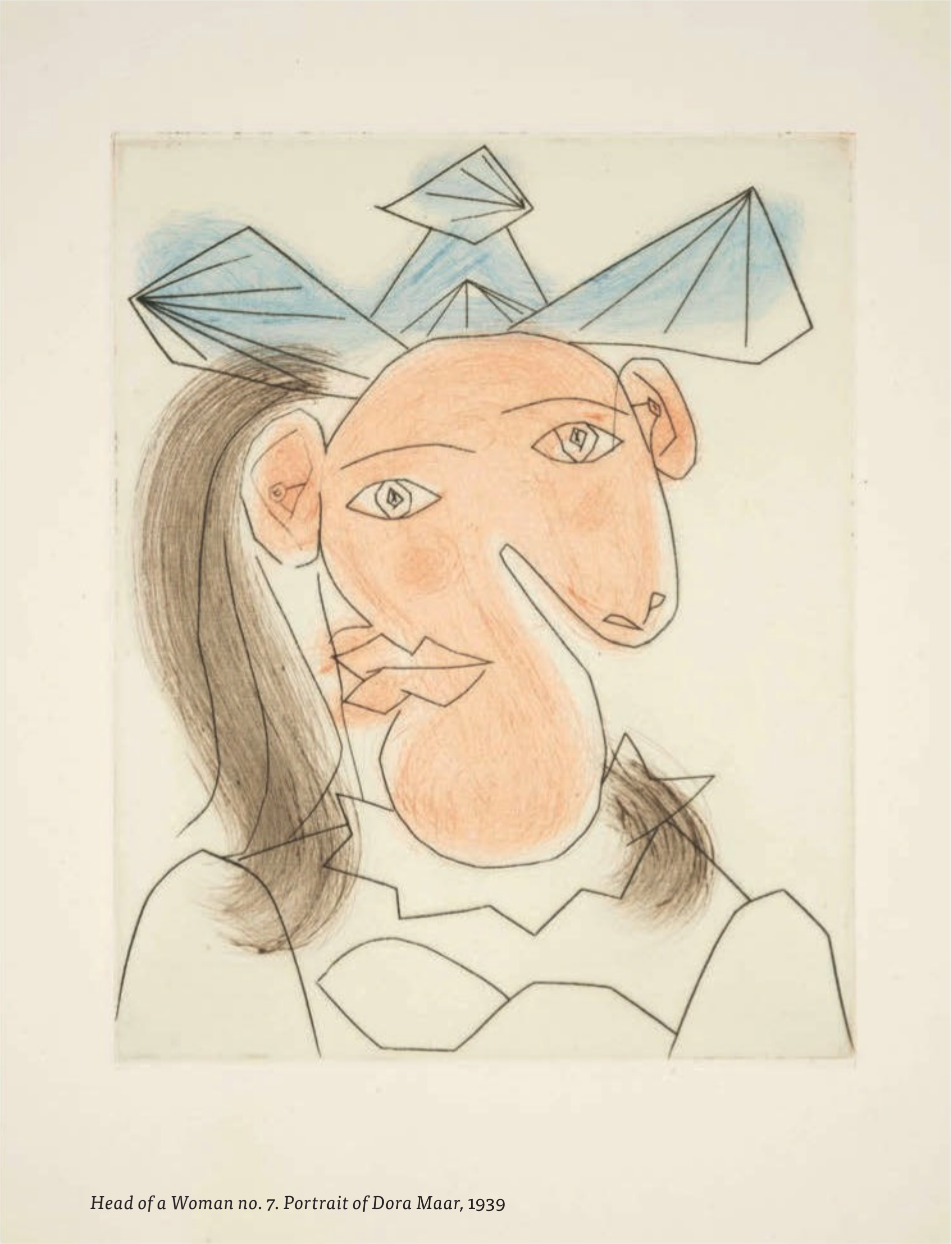


The Frugal Meal, 1904



Head of a Woman no. 7. Portrait of Dora Maar, 1939

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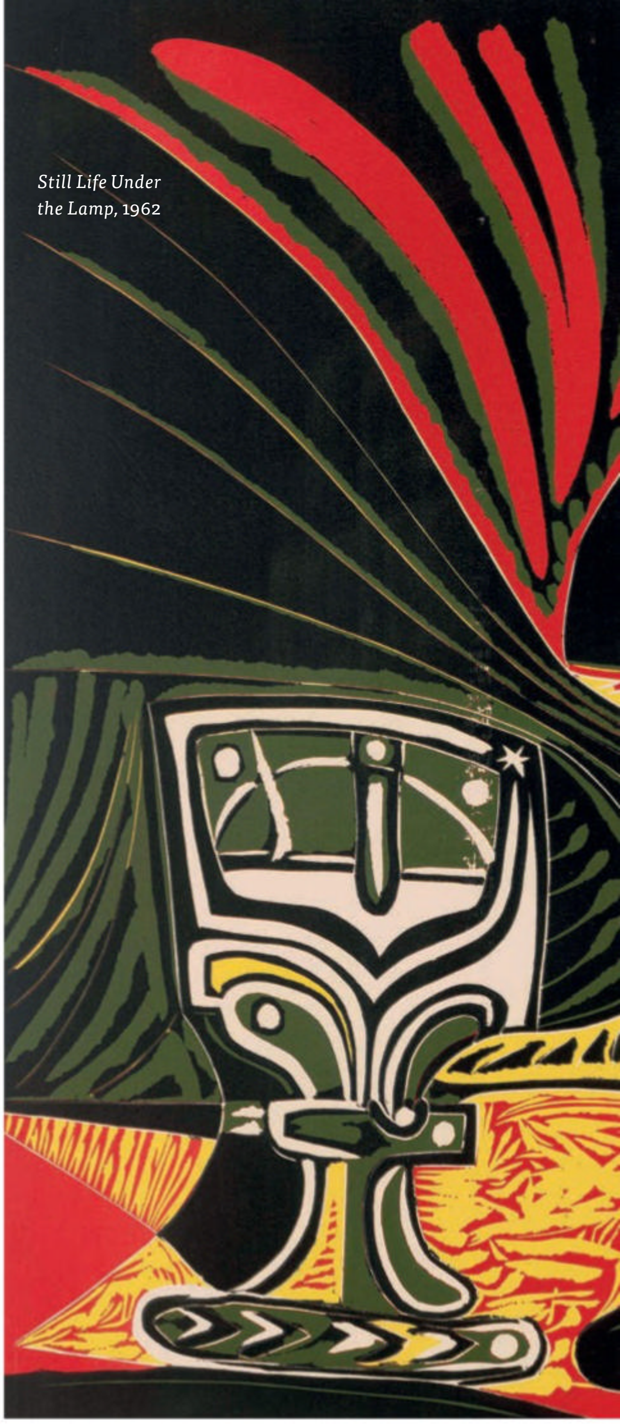

Still Life Under the Lamp, 1962

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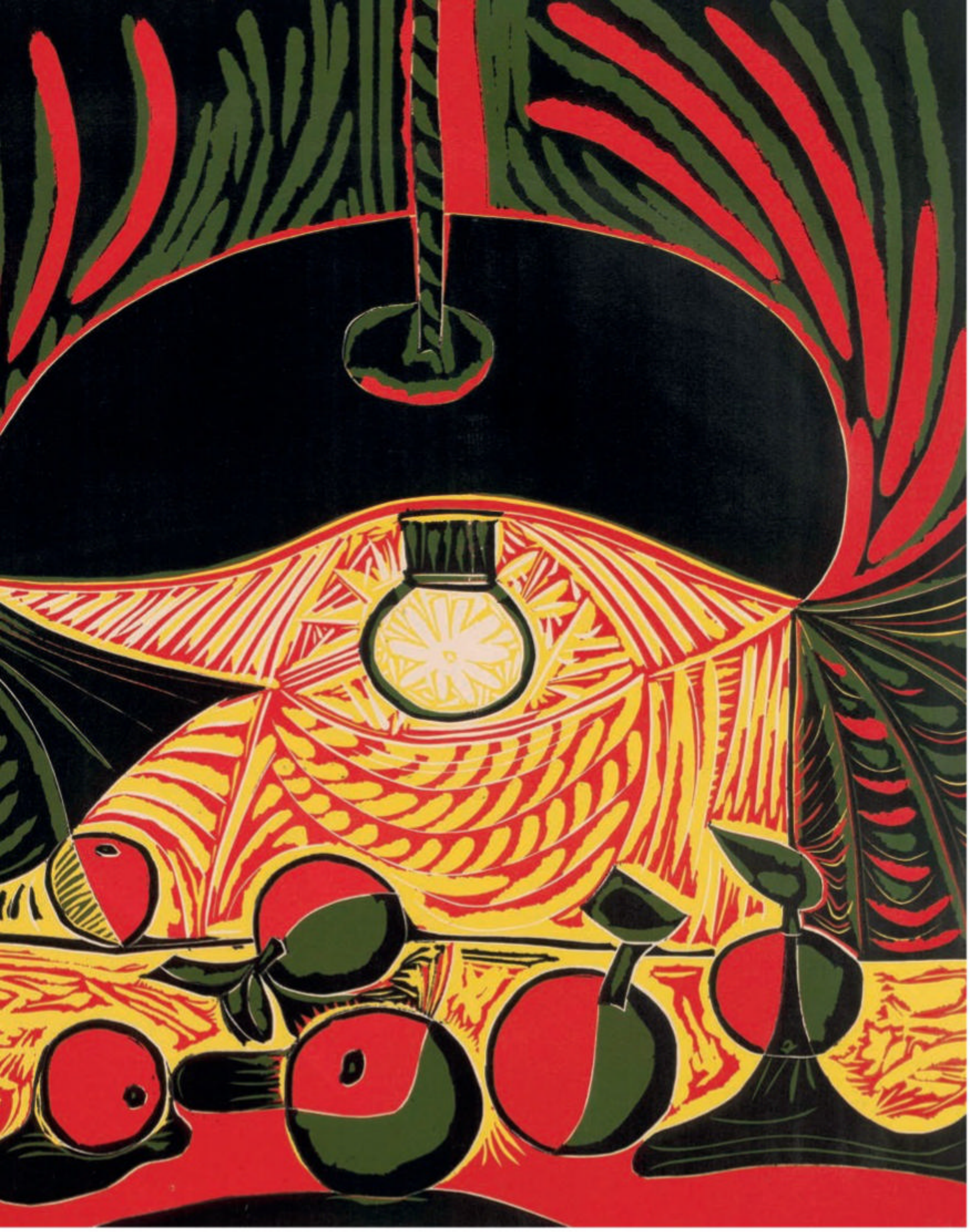
"GIVE ME A MUSEUM and I'll fill it." So declared the ebullient Pablo Picasso, but it seems to have been no idle boast. One of the 20th century's most acclaimed artists was a man of prolific as well as diverse talents. Famous today for his iconic paintings, he was also a dedicated, if episodic printmaker, creating over 2000 prints within his lifetime, many now in the possession of the British Museum.

Visitors can scrutinise over 100 prints on display at a vibrant new exhibition celebrating every aspect of Picasso's printmaking craft. It encompasses his formative years at the dawn of the 20th century, traces the arc of his long career and culminates with his extraordinary *347 Suite*, a large, eclectic group of prints that paid testament to his continuing creativity at the age of 86.

Curator Catherine Daunt says, "Drawn entirely from the Museum's collection, the exhibition is an exploration of Picasso's printmaking from early years in Paris to old age in the South of France. In addition, the exhibition includes works by other artists that represent key influences. These include prints by Matisse, Rembrandt and Goya, and ancient objects from Greece and Rome to show Picasso's engagement with classical art. The British Museum holds the largest collection of prints by Picasso in any UK institution, 553 in total. Many have been acquired over the last 15 years, as curators made efforts to strengthen the collection and acquire examples from the major periods of Picasso's career."

But why did Picasso specifically embrace printmaking throughout his life? Born in Malaga in 1881, Pablo Ruiz Picasso gained early skills as a draughtsman under the tutelage of his father and economic necessity initially held sway, as Catherine realises. "Picasso began to make prints when he moved to Paris in 1904, aged 22. At the time, Paris was a hub for printmaking, with a network of print workshops and publishers to facilitate production. Picasso was no doubt drawn to printmaking as a way of making money. Prints were more affordable than paintings or sculpture and were published in limited editions, so could be sold to a wider market."

But there were other influential factors. "Picasso also recognised the creative possibilities of the medium. He was an excellent, prolific draughtsman and there are many similarities between printmaking and drawing. Every technique learned, from etching and aquatint to lithography and linocut printing, offered new possibilities and enabled him to create images he couldn't achieve in any other way." With perspicacity she adds, "Printmaking also gave Picasso the opportunity to explore a subject or idea in depth through a series of interrelated



images," such as the various Suite series. "Although he did this in painting to a certain extent, he was able to be more instinctive and freewheeling in his prints." Picasso acknowledged this lifelong drive to learn, saying, "I am always doing that which I cannot do, so that I may learn how to do it," perennially relishing experimentation.

Within the exhibition, there are five specific sections, the first focusing on etchings and drypoints Picasso made around 1904. Then an aspiring artist, his first published print was the etching *A Frugal Meal* depicting a gaunt, impoverished couple sitting with a scant meal, albeit consoled by a bottle of wine. It was one of the last works from his Blue Period, a time when his artist's palette was dominated by the colour blue, then symbolically associated with melancholy.

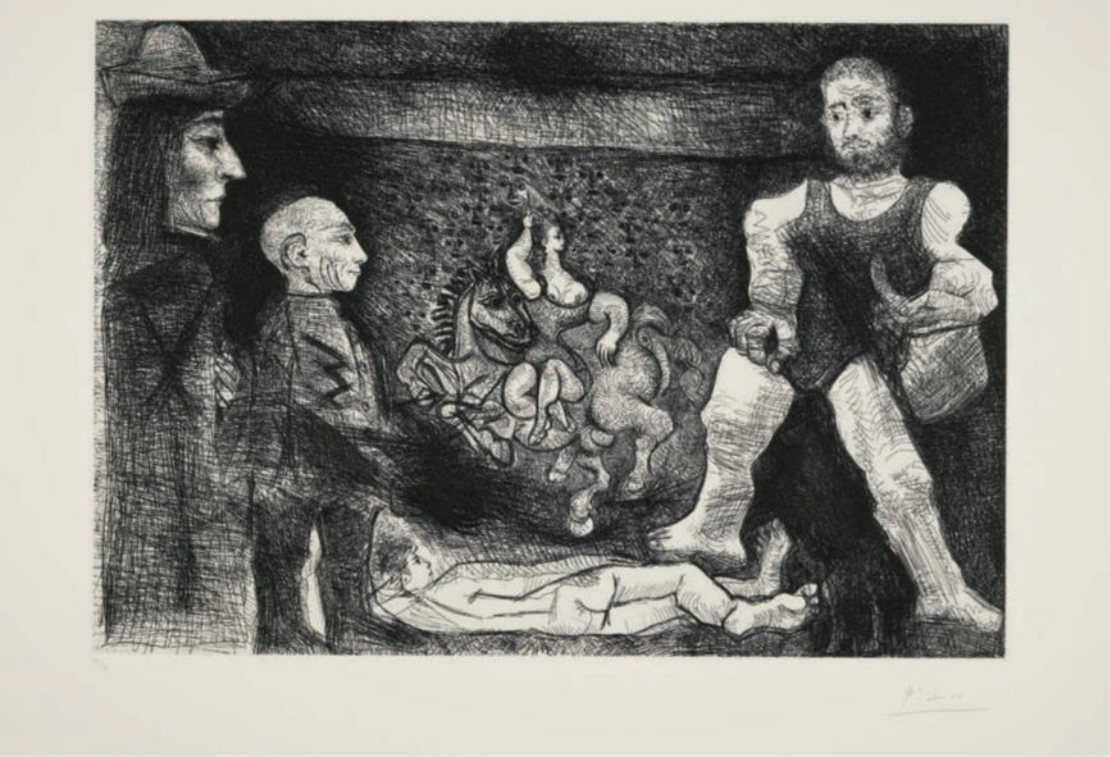
The next section explores the influence of Grecian and Roman art, seen clearly in prints dating from the interwar years. These include a selection from the *Vollard Suite*, a group of 100 etchings Picasso produced between 1930 and 1937 for publisher Ambroise Vollard. Embodying the neoclassical style that emerged from his study of classical sculpture, the series shows Picasso employing myriad references from mythology and the history of art, all reflecting the mysteries of the artist's creative powers.

The Daily Telegraph's former Art Critic, Richard Dorment, felt that these prints, slowly composed, seem to "reflect Picasso's erotic and artistic obsessions, marital vicissitudes and the darkening political situation" during the thirties. "In the years Picasso worked on the series, fascism spread through Europe and civil war erupted in Spain. These anxieties found their way into the *Vollard Suite*," so that by its conclusion, "and the last images of the blind minotaur, you feel that you're in a different emotional universe from the sunlit arcadia encountered at the beginning."

As the exhibition progresses the third section examines Picasso's engagement with lithography from 1945. This section coincides with his move to the South of France, a lifestyle change reflected within the images. The penultimate section takes linocut printmaking as its focus, something Picasso explored after meeting printer Hidalgo Arnéra, his focus on this discipline intense between the years 1959 and 1962.

Finally, in one last intense burst of creative energy, arrives the *347 Suite*, dating from 1968. Between March to October Picasso devoted himself solely to creating prints, often completing six or seven daily, technical demands realised courtesy of brothers Aldo and Piero Crommelynck, who had a studio near his home in the South of France. ▶

Picasso, his work and his audience, 16-22 March 1968



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Christie's Gallery says of this landmark series, "*Suite 347* has been likened to the artist's personal diary over this period of prodigious creativity. Part confessional, part fantastical, Picasso unashamedly illustrates his experiences and desires in an effort to leave as complete a documentation of himself and his imagination as possible. The successive entries, each compulsively dated and serialised, read like a sprawling epic novel."

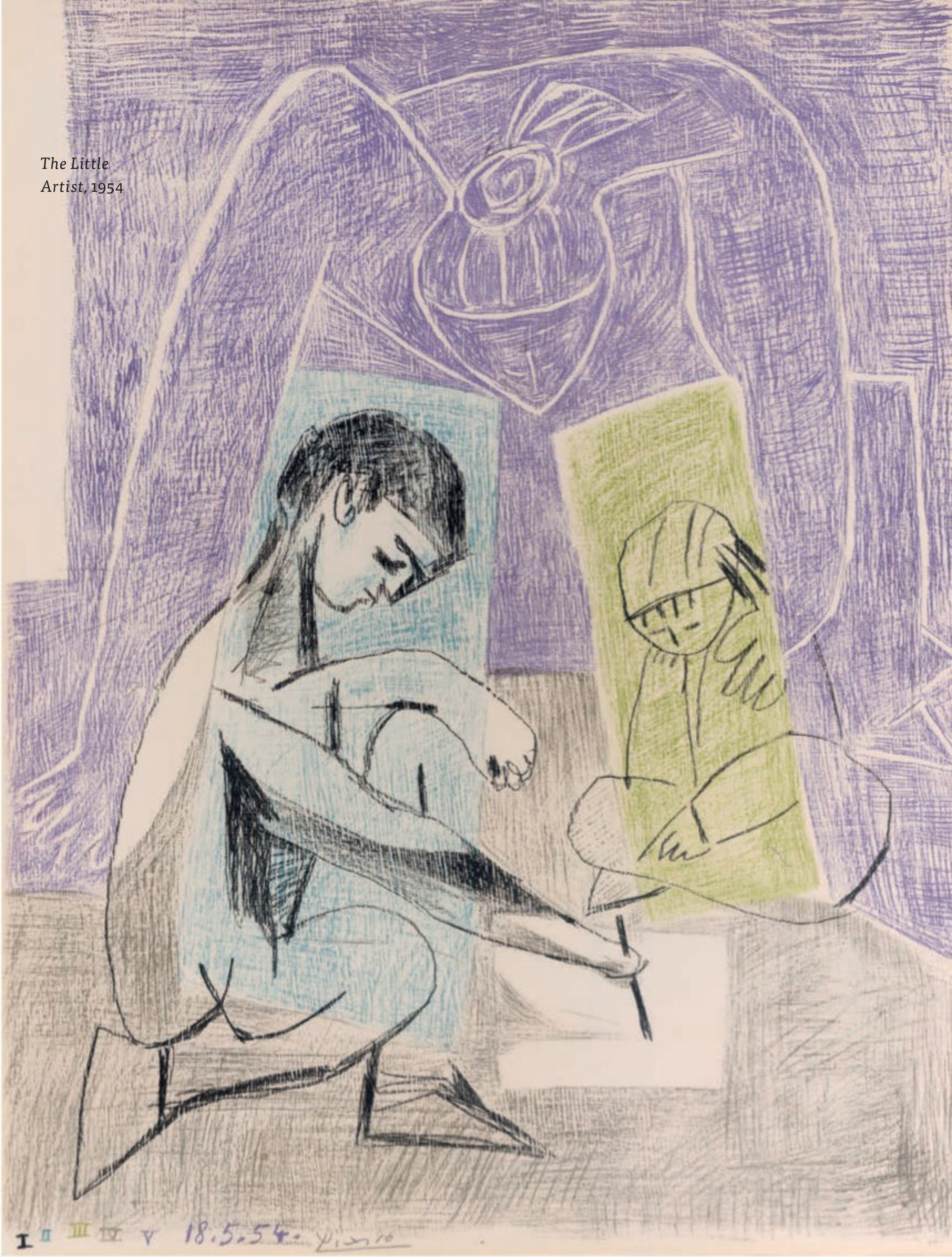
Corroborating the parallel between art and fiction, Picasso would say "One never knows what's going to come out, but as soon as the drawing gets underway, a story or idea is born. I spend hour after hour while I draw, observing my creatures and thinking about the mad things they're up to. Basically, it's my way of writing fiction."

Curator Catherine Daunt says of the *347 Suite*, "The Museum acquired the entire suite in 2014, 28 prints included in this exhibition. Picasso seems to have found great pleasure in making these prints. At a time when he was reflecting on life and considering his legacy, the suite includes references to Picasso's friends and characters from literature and the movies. The prints demonstrate that even in his final years, Picasso continued to experiment with technique, for example by smearing grease on the printing plate to create unusual textures."

Picasso once said, "The purpose of art is washing the dust of daily life off our souls," and Catherine agrees that for him, work and life were indivisible. "It is impossible to separate Picasso's biography from his art because his images contain so many references to his own life. He frequently depicted partners (Dora Maar, Françoise Gilot and Jacqueline Roque) in print as well as friends and artists whose work he admired. Marie-Thérèse Walter, the young woman with whom he began an affair in 1927 while married to Olga Khokhlova, appears repeatedly from the 1920s and 1930s. The prints of the *Vollard Suite*, for example, reflect Picasso's lust for Walter, as well as his sexual dominance of her and his conflicted feelings about the breakdown of his marriage."

On offer here is the rare opportunity to view aspects of Picasso's work that, given his worldwide renown, are not as readily recognisable. Catherine acknowledges, "Visitors may be less familiar with Picasso's prints than with other areas of his art, such as his paintings and sculptures. Hopefully, this exhibition will demonstrate that printmaking provided an important creative output for Picasso and that he was as experimental and innovative in printmaking as he was in other media."

Picasso: Printmaker is on until 30 March 2025. britishmuseum.org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The Little Artist, 1954

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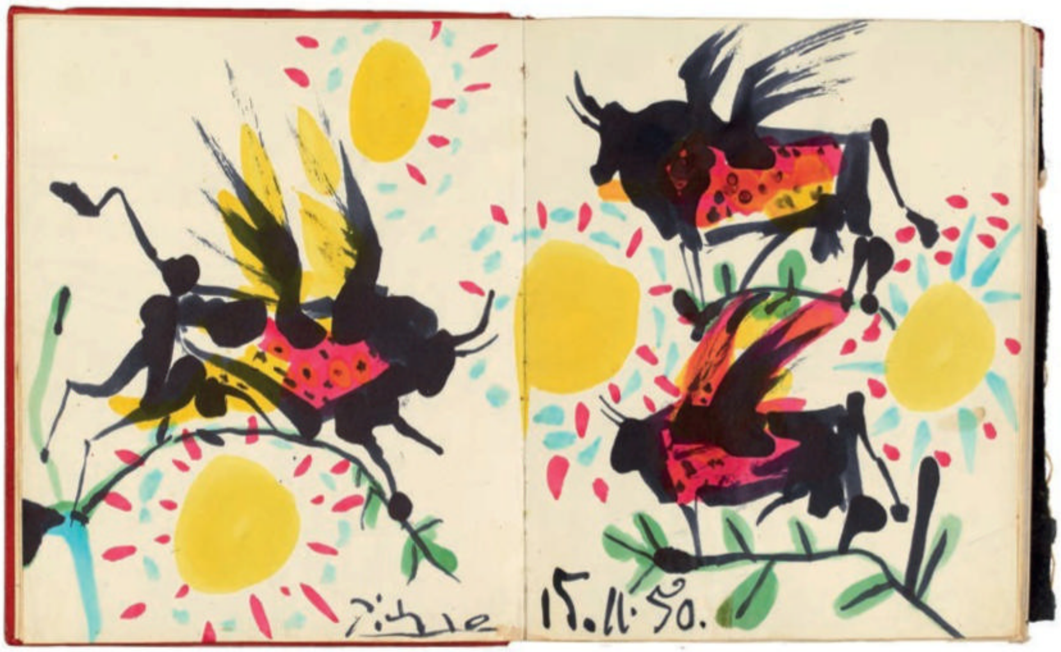

Leaping Bulls, 1950

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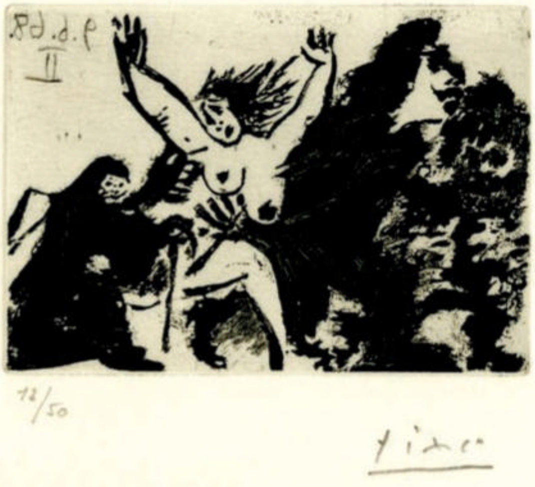

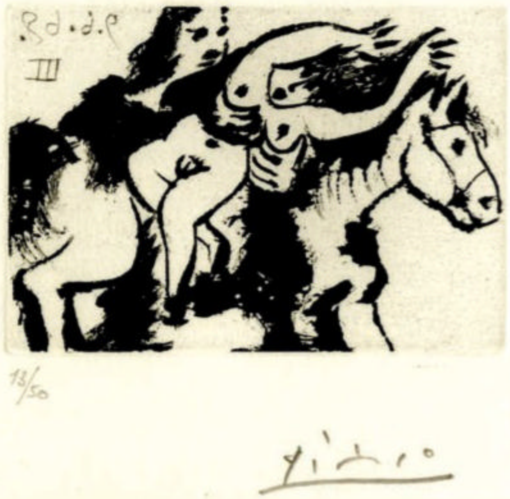

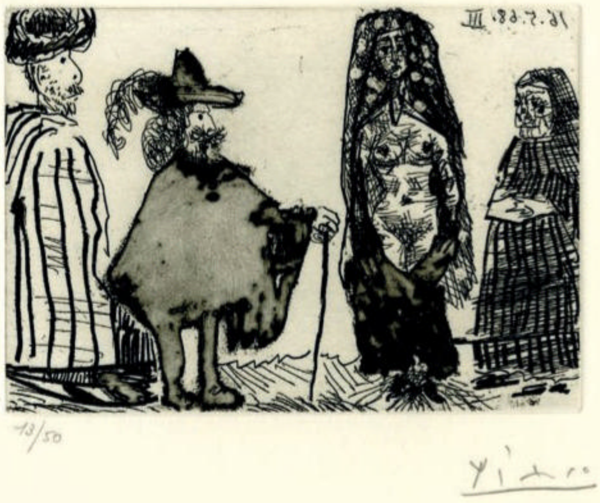

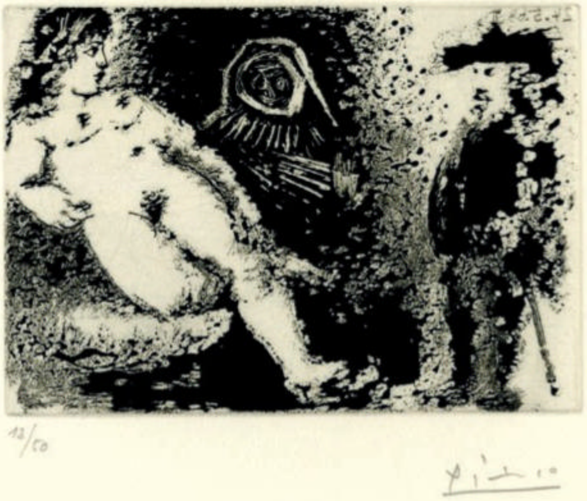

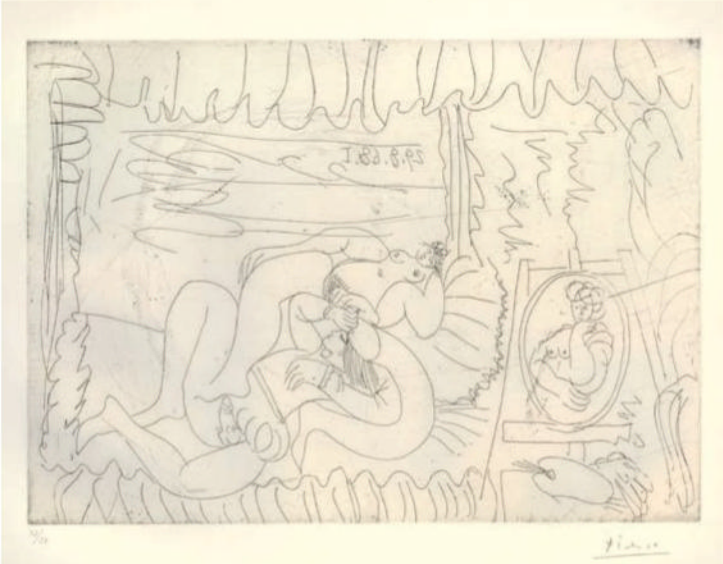

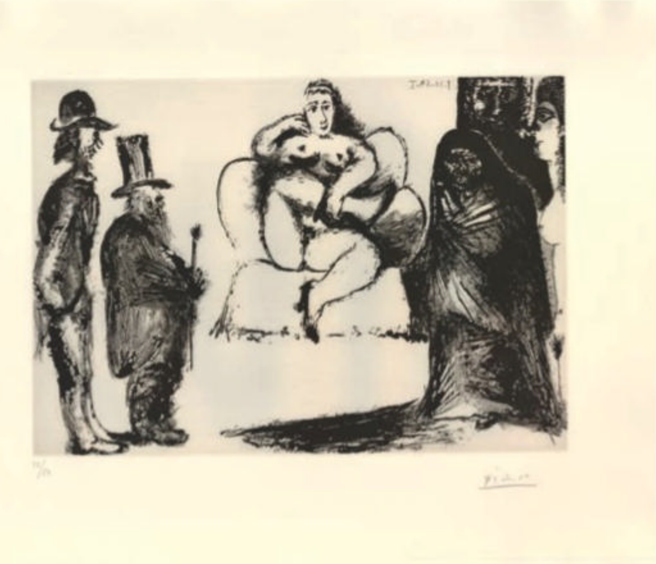

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TOP ROW: LEFT *Kidnapping, on foot, with Celestina*, 1968 **RIGHT** *Kidnapping on horseback*, 1968 **SECOND ROW: LEFT** *Arabian Nights and Celestina, the young slave*, 1968 **RIGHT** *Celestina, the girl and old client*, 1968 **THIRD ROW: LEFT** *Raphael and La Fornarina, I*, 1968 **RIGHT** *Celestina, maja or Olympia naked, with Manet and Marcellin Desboutin*, 1968

WIN! BRITISH MUSEUM EXHIBITION TICKETS

Viking, a global leader in experiential travel, is offering *Artists & Illustrators* readers the chance to win a pair of tickets to the British Museum's *Picasso: Printmaker* exhibition (to 30 March 2025).

The exhibition offers insights into Picasso's life through his art, including his complex relationships with women and his partnerships with printers, publishers and other artists. Spanning his entire career, it follows his engagement with different printmaking techniques and his changing approaches to making art.

To win a pair of tickets courtesy of Viking, one of the British Museum's cultural partners, please answer the following question:

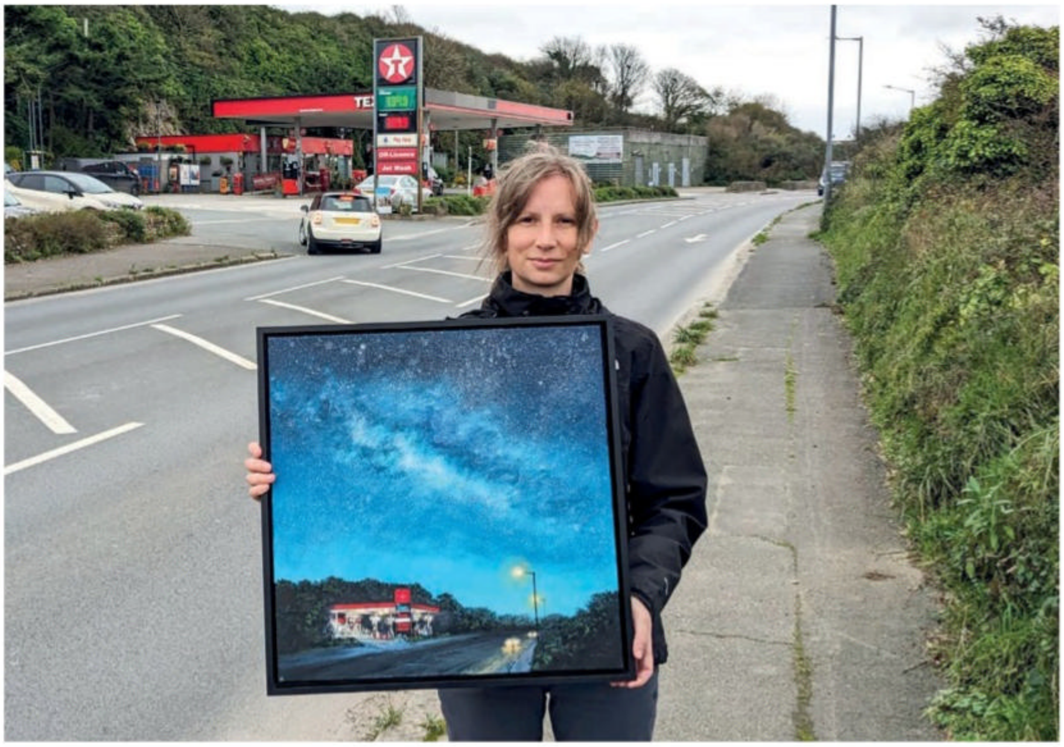
Q: Viking guests can take a private guided tour and admire some of Picasso's work, donated from the private collections of the Picasso family and totalling almost 300 pieces on which Viking ocean voyage?

To enter, visit *tinyurl.com/picassoprintmaker* □

Driving Home,
oil and acrylic,
50x50cm

The British ART prize 2024

THE CARAN D'ACHE Genève PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD



Diane Griffiths

As voted for by you, this year's winner of The British Art Prize People's Choice Award captures the essence of everyday life with striking detail and depth. *Ramsha Vistro* digs deeper ▶

THE PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD

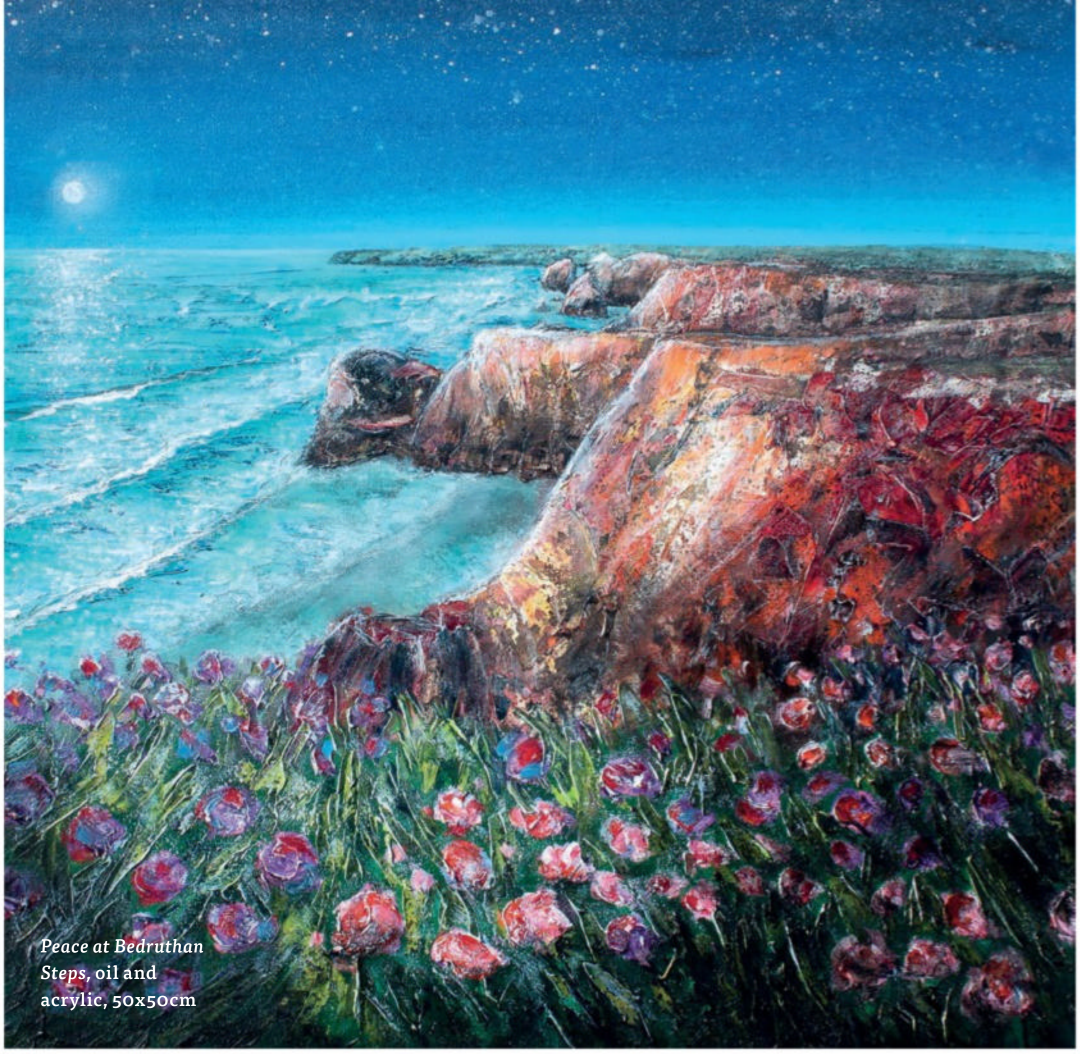
Diane Griffiths' *Driving Home* captures an unlikely subject: a petrol station. But it's the kind of painting that invites you to stop, look and think. With the esteemed People's Choice Award under her belt, Diane has proven that the beauty of everyday life, if seen through the right lens, is anything but ordinary.

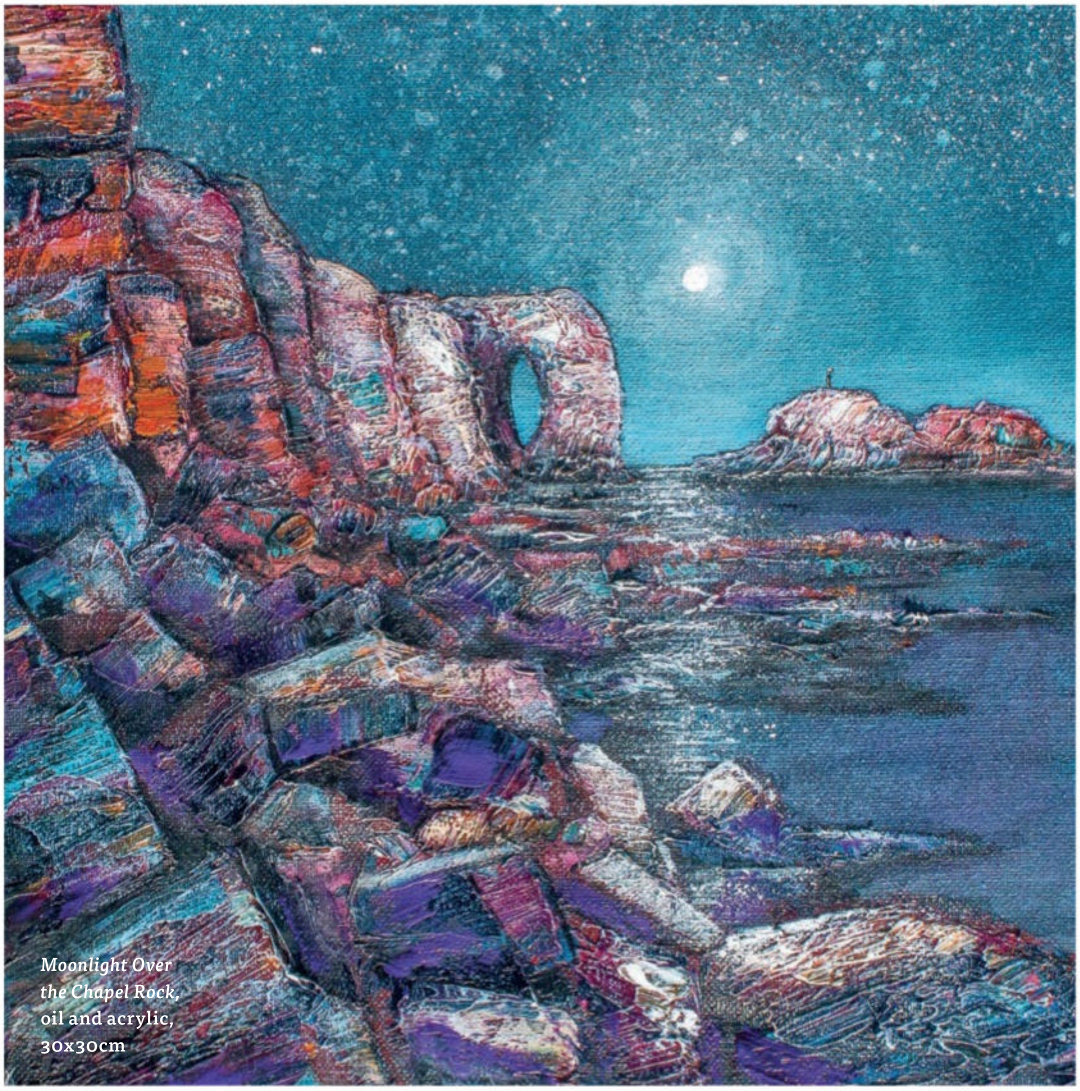
Her foundation in art was built, not with brushes or palettes, but through a deep understanding of line, form, light and shadow. Her early education focused on developing these core skills, which she later combined with her self-taught approach to create a distinctive style. "At school, I developed these skills carefully," she says. "I learned to capture what I saw accurately, then later, I was encouraged to be more imaginative. It was a shift from technique to originality, and I wasn't always sure where I fitted in."

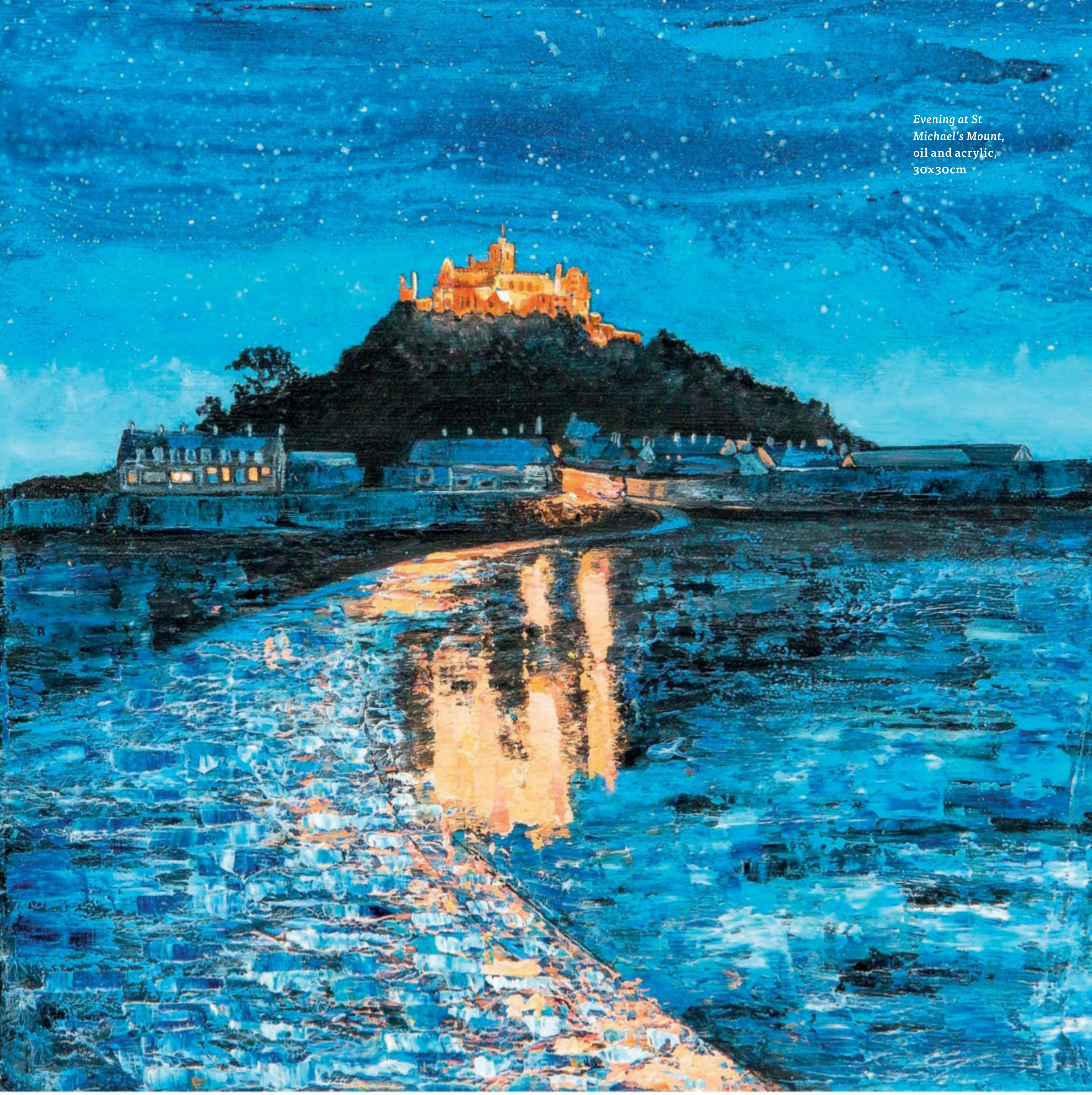
Diane had moved to London to pursue a career in the media industry which took her away from the world of art for many years, yet her passion for painting remained. "It wasn't until I moved to Cornwall that I finally had the time and space to return to art," she recalls. "Now, I'm more relaxed about how I achieve the level of accomplishment I want. I'm fascinated by colour and texture, blending both detailed work with abstract elements."

As a self-taught artist, Diane has grappled with a sense of self-doubt. "I have no formal art education beyond A-Level, and sometimes I wonder what I might have missed. But, with so many self-taught artists emerging, I don't feel as much of an outsider anymore." Her background in media helped her overcome some of these doubts. "The media industry exposed me to diverse ways of thinking and communicating. It made me realise there's no one formula for success."

Driving Home, which won over the public with its depiction of a humble petrol station, explores several layers of meaning. "The first layer was about capturing something beautiful in a mundane activity, like driving or filling up at the pump," says Diane. "I wanted to show how ordinary moments can be stunning if we take the time to look at them from the right perspective." The second highlights humanity's place under the vastness of the stars. "Even in our everyday lives, we should stop and appreciate the world around us, knowing we are part of something far greater and


Peace at Bedruthan Steps, oil and acrylic, 50x50cm


Moonlight Over the Chapel Rock, oil and acrylic, 30x30cm



Evening at St Michael's Mount, oil and acrylic, 30x30cm

more spectacular."

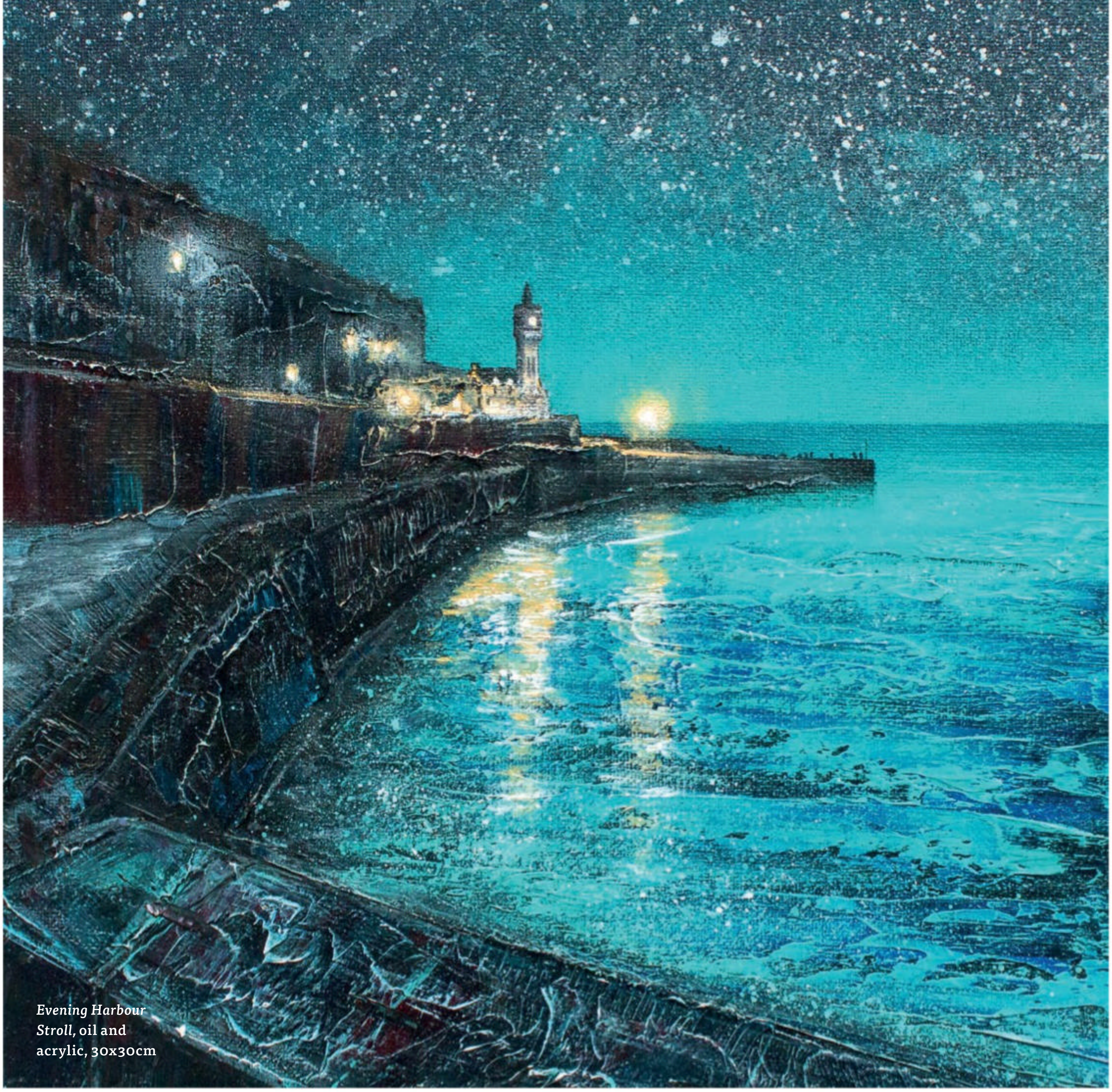
For Diane, the painting also holds a personal connection to Newquay. "It was inspired by my drive home one evening," she shares. "The garage sits next to The Gannel, an estuary between Newquay and Crantock. It's not a typical tourist spot, but it's iconic in its own way. The red of the garage branding stands out against the landscape, and that captured the imagination of many people who recognised it as part of Newquay's character."

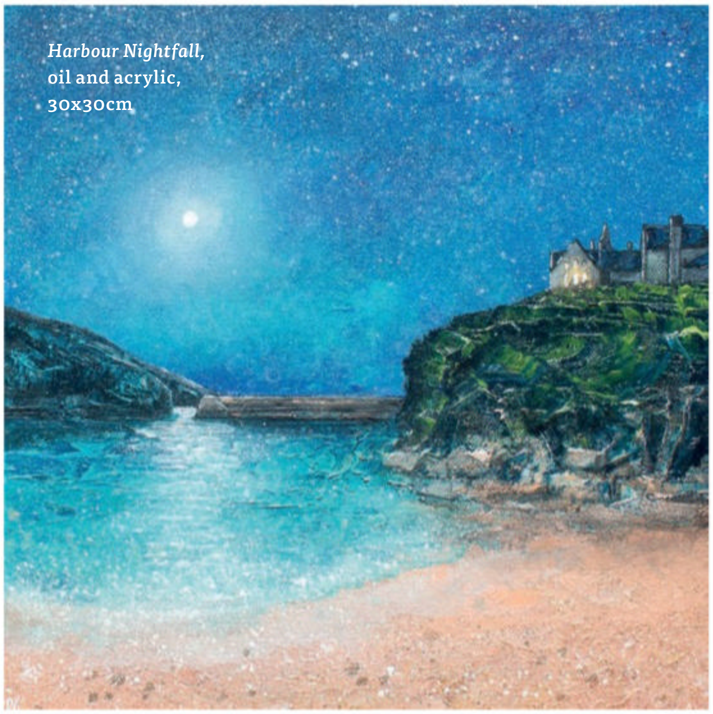
The final layer is about universal connection as Diane explains, "Although it's a painting of a garage in Newquay, it resonates with anyone who's driven along an 'A' road. Everyone has had that experience of passing a familiar building and I wanted to tap into that collective nostalgia."

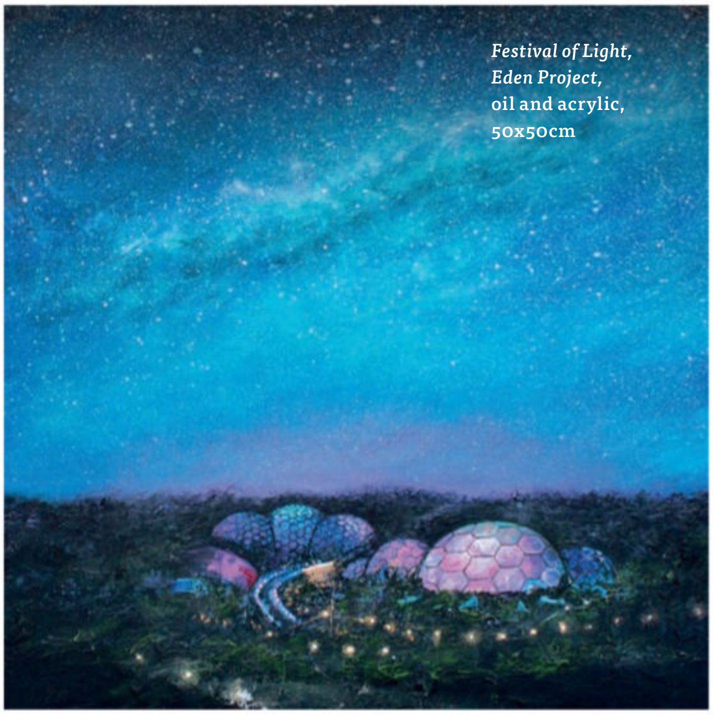
The artist's creative process is deeply rooted in her connection to the landscape. "I need to understand how my subject fits into its world. I have to be there, experiencing it first-hand. The technical side involves understanding the landscape's structure, but the emotional connection is just as important. It's about soaking up the atmosphere and letting that guide my work."

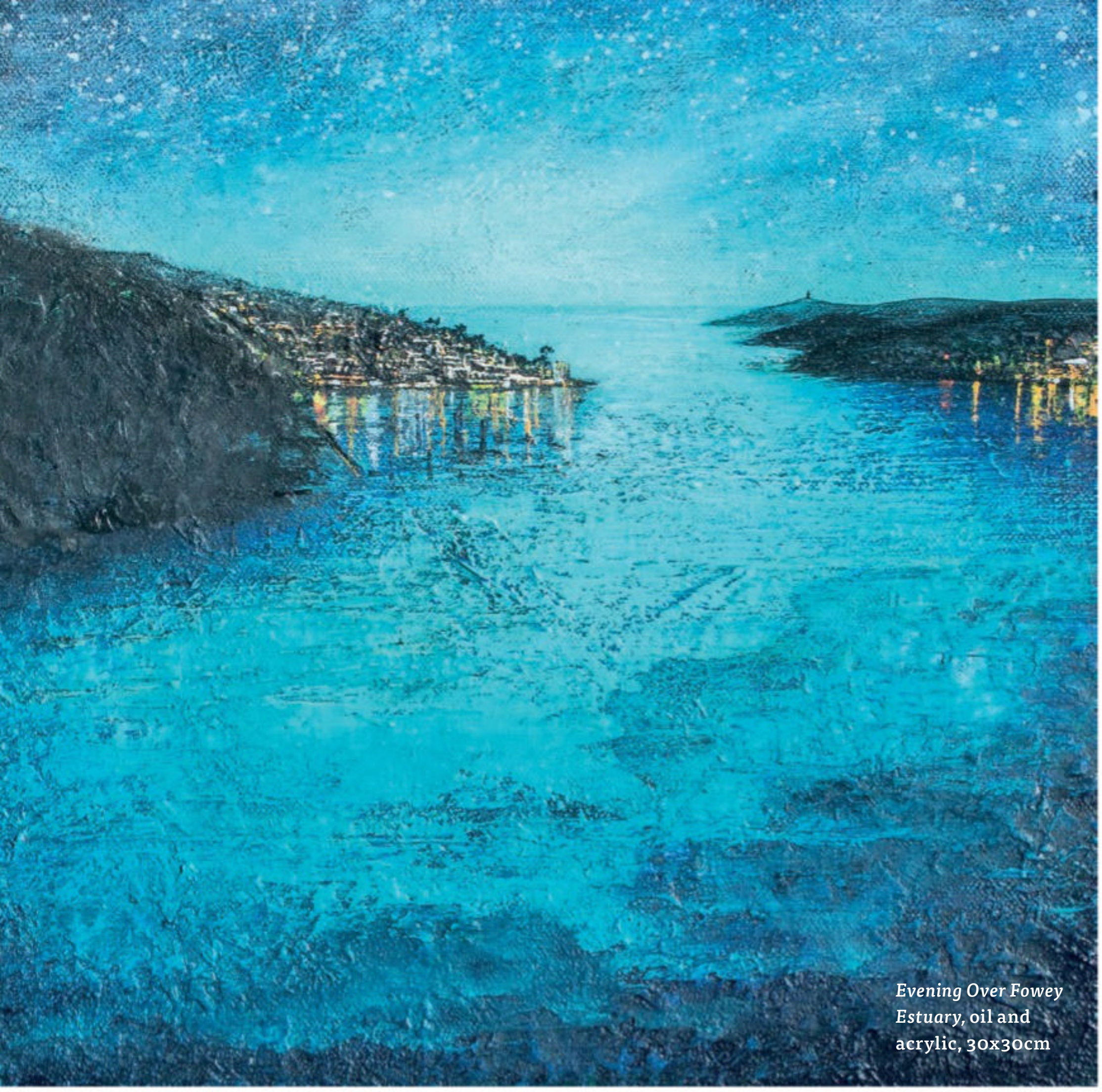
This connection to place also drives her use of references. "I take multiple photos from different angles to capture what my memory may miss when I return home," she says. "Then, my imagination takes over. The sky in *Driving Home* wasn't really a Milky Way sky, but I wanted to create something more striking."

Her signature starry skies are a blend of ▶

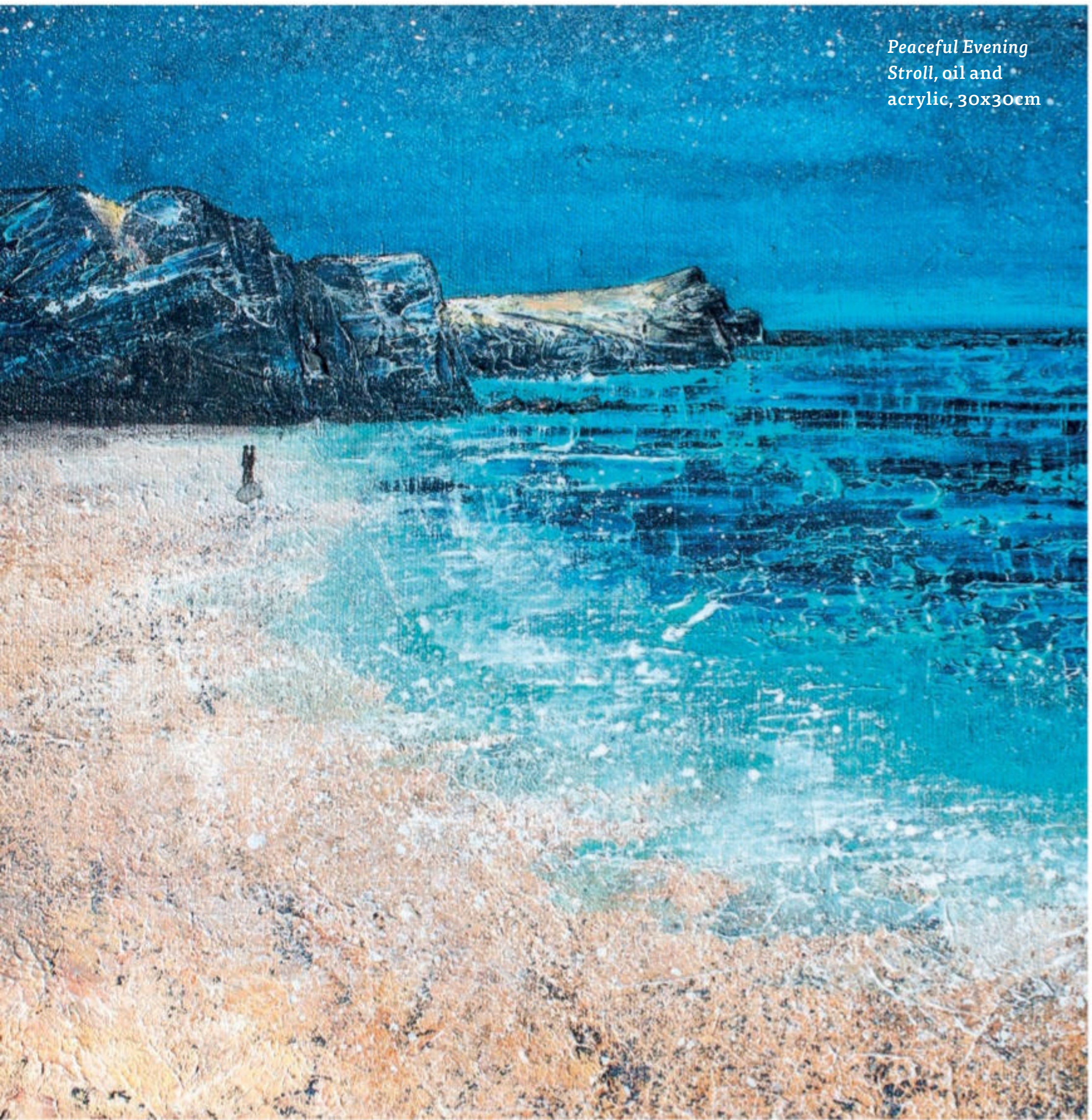

Evening Harbour Stroll, oil and acrylic, 30x30cm


Harbour Nightfall, oil and acrylic, 30x30cm


Festival of Light, Eden Project, oil and acrylic, 50x50cm



Evening Over Fowey Estuary, oil and acrylic, 30x30cm



Peaceful Evening Stroll, oil and acrylic, 30x30cm

acrylic and spray enamel, techniques she's refined over time. "The base layer goes down in acrylic and I blend it using a sponge. Then, I apply a layer of water and spray enamel to create depth. From there, I splatter stars with a brush and palette knife, building up the Milky Way with layers of acrylic."

Although Diane's studio is unconventional – "I've taken over the dining room and spare bedroom," she laughs – she finds it an ideal space to paint. "It's central in the house, and I like being around people while I paint. It can be distracting, but it's also a more sociable way to work."

The time leading up to this win was a mix of excitement and uncertainty for Diane. "When I was selected as a finalist, I was thrilled," she admits. "But I was also overwhelmed by the talent of the other artists. The People's Choice Award was a shock, and I had no idea if my efforts to gain votes would be enough."

The painting's full circle moment has added a heartwarming twist. "When I made it to the top 50, I reached out to the garage, not sure what kind of response I'd get," Diane recalls. "The response was overwhelmingly positive, and now *Driving Home* will hang in the garage itself. It's a fitting homecoming."

> **"Ordinary moments can be stunning if we take the time to look at them."**

The garage owner, Jack, shared his thoughts, "As a family and a business, we are honoured that Diane decided to paint our fuel station for her piece *Driving Home*. We have seen all the kind words from the locals on Facebook, in our shop and through the local radio. It's been so lovely seeing the community come together to support a local artist who deserves everything she has achieved with this piece."

For Diane, the award and the recognition are more than a confidence boost; they are a validation of her practice. "It's always a little intimidating to put your work out there," she reflects. "But the achievement reminds me that I'm on the right path, and all the hard work is paying off."

At the core of Diane's art is the drive to create something tangible from the intangible. "Art is special," she says. "It's about taking something in my mind and sharing it with others. That's what keeps me coming back for more." ***handonart.com*** □

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EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO PAINT AND CREATE

British Art Club member **ROSEANNA CHETWOOD** is a contemporary animal artist who uses palette knives to create her oil pet portraits. Here are her top tips for working in this way

1

Make your oil paints go further

Oil paint can be a costly medium, and using impasto palette knife techniques can significantly increase the expense. To make your oil paints go further, I've found that mixing in a wax medium is a cost-effective solution. Not only does it bulk up the paint, but it also reduces drying time and produces a matte finish which creates a striking contrast when paired with pure oil paint.

2

Give the Sgraffito technique a try

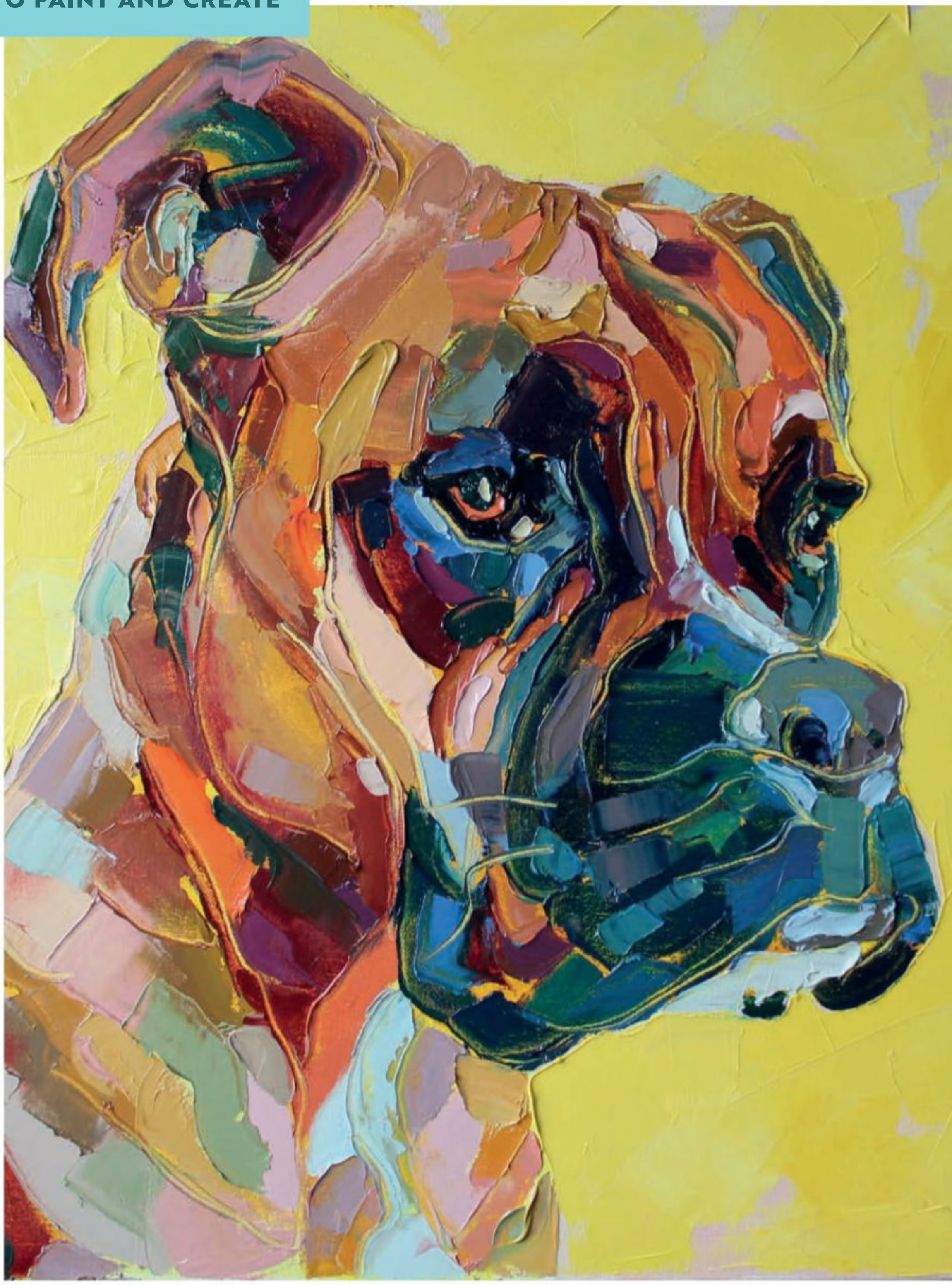
This is a technique which involves scratching into wet oil paint with the tip of the knife, revealing a contrasting layer beneath. By carving illustrative lines into my own palette knife paintings, I can balance broad, sweeping strokes with finer elements, such as defining whiskers or emphasising the nostrils on a dog's nose.

3

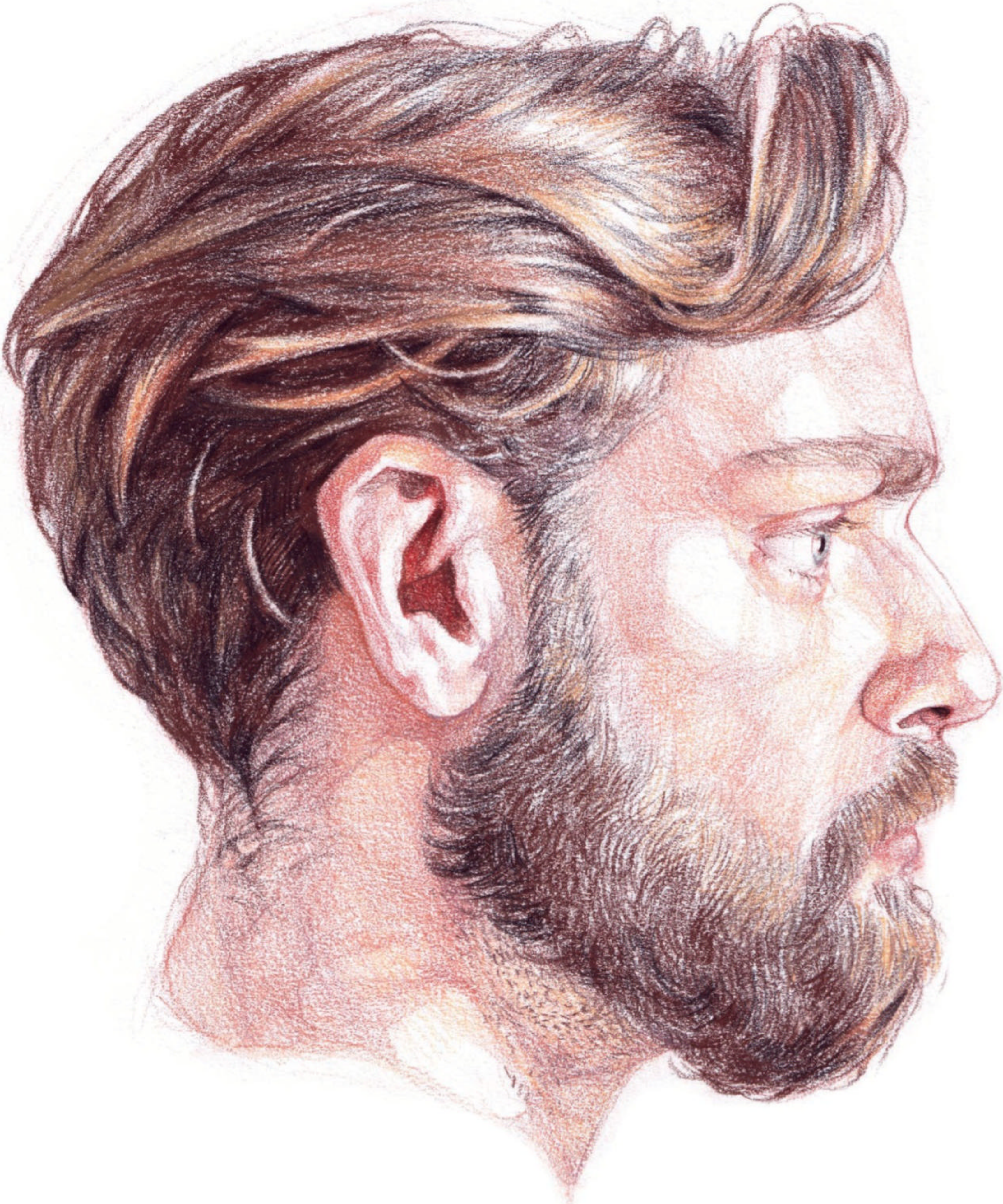
Embrace the unpredictability of palette knives

Each time you press the knife to the surface and sweep it across, the marks it creates are fluid and unplanned, offering a sense of freedom. Instead of resisting this uncertainty, embrace it; it's part of the creative process. And if things don't go as intended, the beauty of working with oils and palette knives is the ability to simply scrape off the paint and start fresh.

roseannachetwood.com ◻

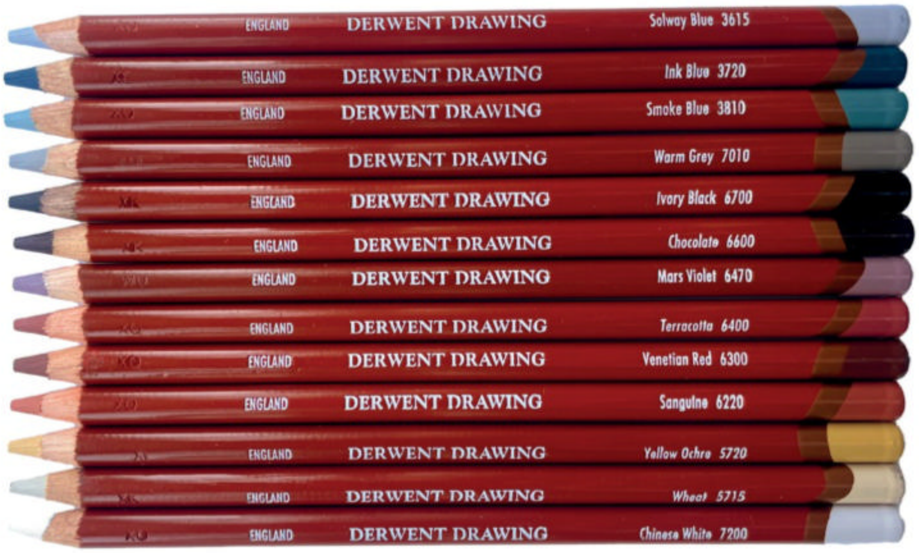


AWAITING YOUR RETURN, OIL ON CANVAS, 60X60CM



Drawing faces: *Hair*

In the final instalment of his series on how to draw different parts of the head, artist and tutor **JAKE SPICER** shows you how to master hair


ENGLAND DERWENT DRAWING Solway Blue 3615
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ENGLAND DERWENT DRAWING Sanguine 6220
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ENGLAND DERWENT DRAWING Wheat 5715
ENGLAND DERWENT DRAWING Chinese White 7200

Over the past five issues we have looked at approaches to drawing the features of the face, recognising how each feature makes a different contribution to a portrait: the nose and ears support good proportion, while the eyes and mouth convey expression and likeness. Hair, or the hairless expanse of a bald head, does a little of both. Hair bridges the space between the face and our subject's surroundings, framing the proportions of their features; the distance between the features and hairline gives us the shape of the cheek and forehead in negative. As well as having a structural role in a portrait, hair is one of our primary sources of personal expression and a source of layered meaning. The texture and colour of your subject's hair might speak about their ancestry and family history while the hairstyle they have chosen can be an outward expression of gender, social influences and personal creativity. The immediate state of somebody's hairstyle can even be an analogue for their mood, with a bad hair day synonymous with a poor state of being. All of these factors feed into how we see our subject and how we choose to draw their hair.

Hair also provides a wonderful opportunity for the portrait artist to be playful with their interpretation of style, shape and texture, so while this article focuses on the naturalistic depiction of hair, it is worth studying how other artists have chosen to represent hair and to explore your own playful interpretations.

In this final instalment of our six-part series, we'll be breaking from our previous structure to explore how three different hairstyles can be tackled, giving particular attention to the overall shape, flow, tone and texture of hair – our main drawing tackles both head and facial hair as part of a complete portrait followed by some focused hair studies in four stages. You might want to copy some of the drawings overleaf before going in to make some isolated studies of hair from your own portrait subjects.

MATERIALS

Once again, I've used a variety of different colours of Derwent Drawing pencils on 140gsm cartridge paper for this drawing. The soft colour pencils can be easily erased with a regular vinyl eraser – I have also used an electric eraser to draw light back into some areas of the hair with greater precision. You could use any erasable medium to follow the same process, including graphite pencil, charcoal or pastel.

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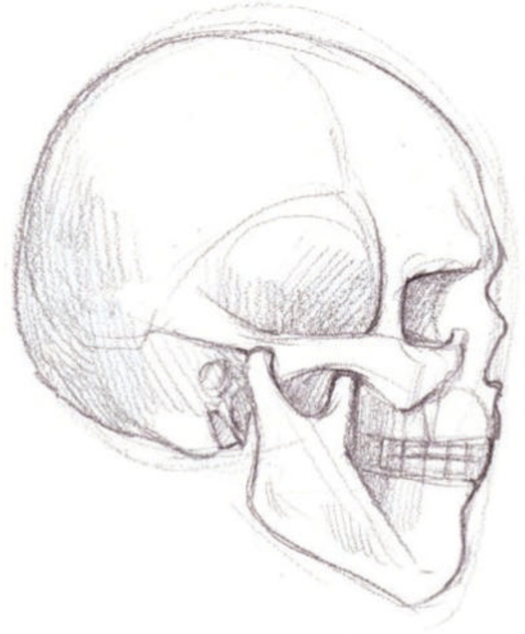
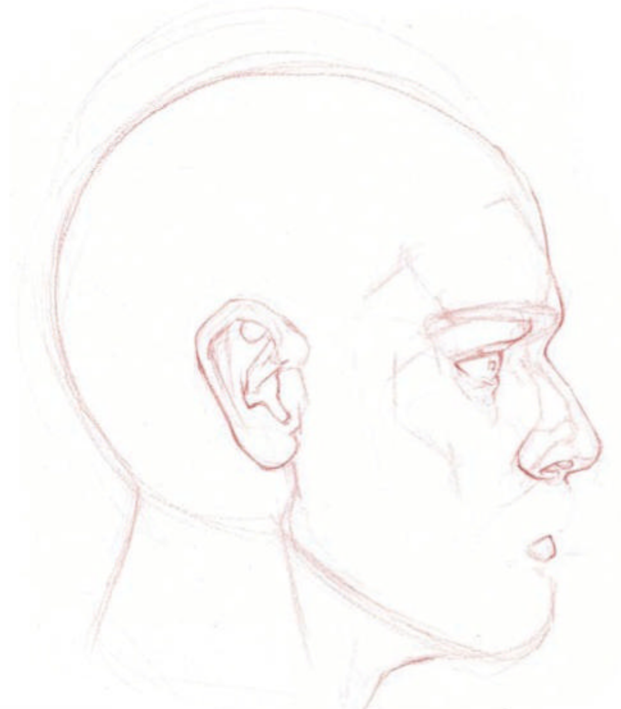
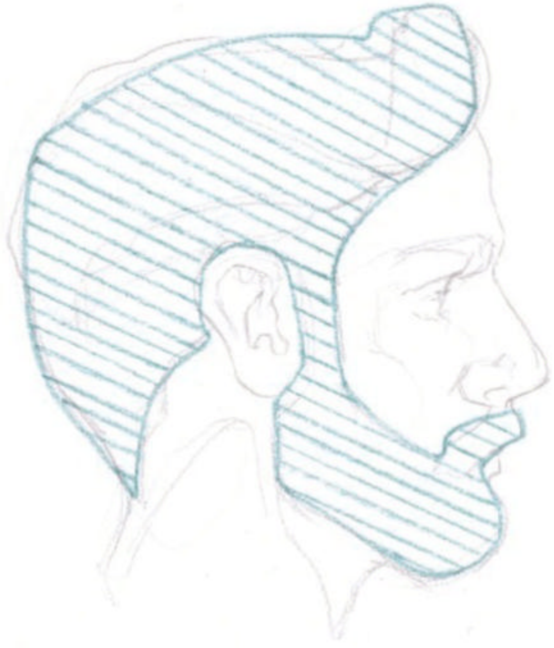


STEP 1: THE SKULL

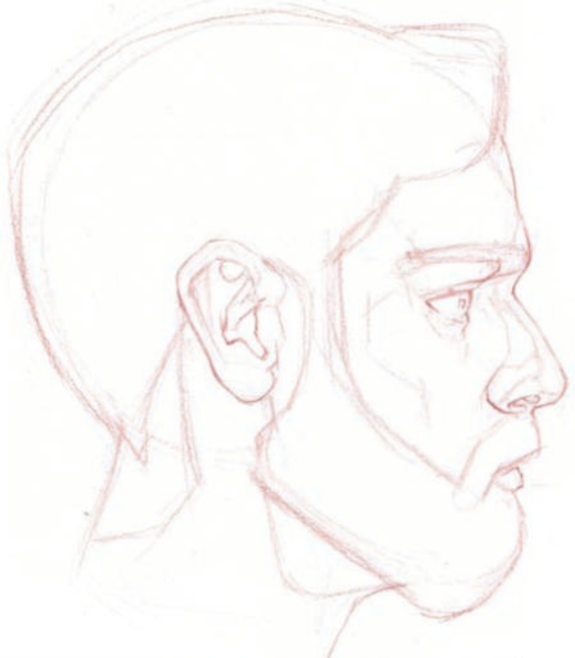
If you press your fingers into your own hair you will be able to feel the hard form of the skull beneath. While the outer edge of hair and facial hair might mark the visual limit of the head it can be helpful to establish the imagined shape of the skull to support your observations of what is going above it.

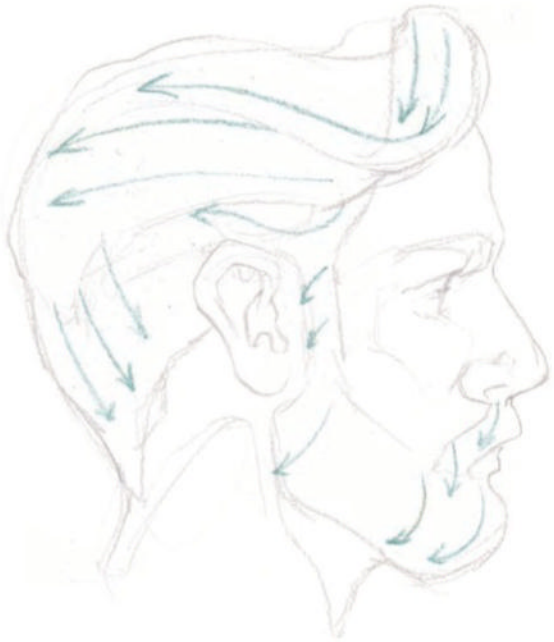




STEP 2: SHAPE

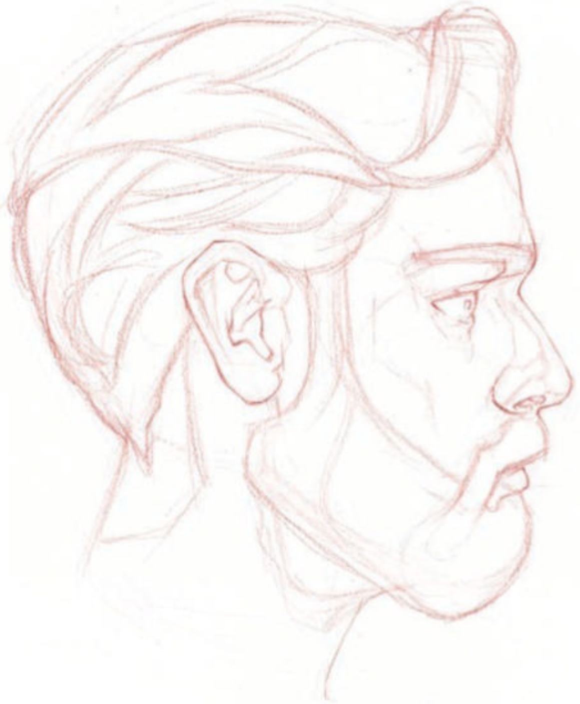
While it is tempting to jump straight into drawing hair texture, it is important to establish the over-all, helmet-like shape of hair early in a study to give volume to head and facial hair. Drawing in shape early can also help you check the negative spaces between the features and the hair line – check the shape of the forehead or cheek in your drawing against what you see in your observed subject and adjust them before committing to more detail in the hair.

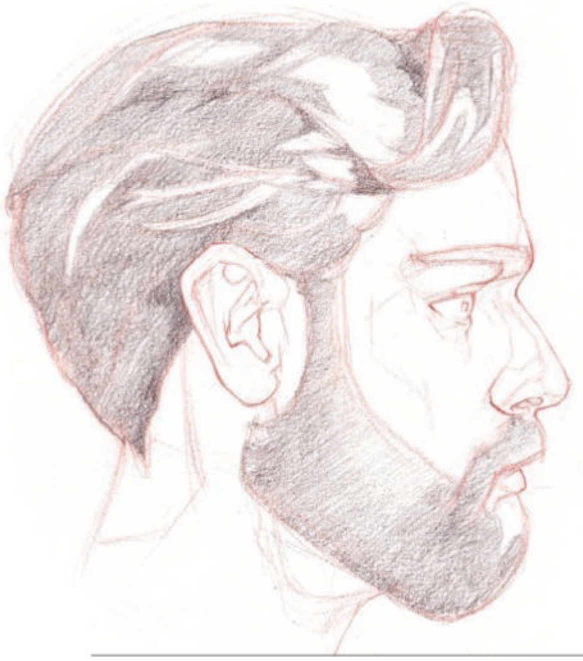




STEP 3: FLOWS

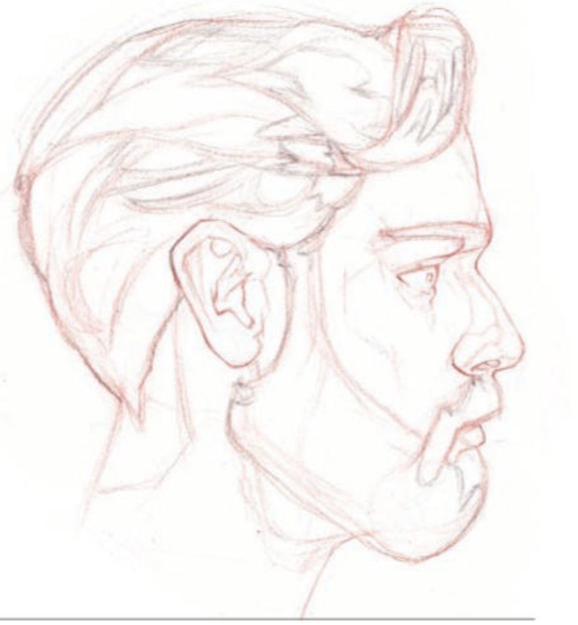
Within the boundaries of the hair's overall shape, you might also encounter grouped clumps of hair that flow in a common direction, pulled down by gravity or consciously shaped into bunches, plaits or dreadlocks. Break down the larger shape of the hair into these smaller flows to help guide tone and texture.

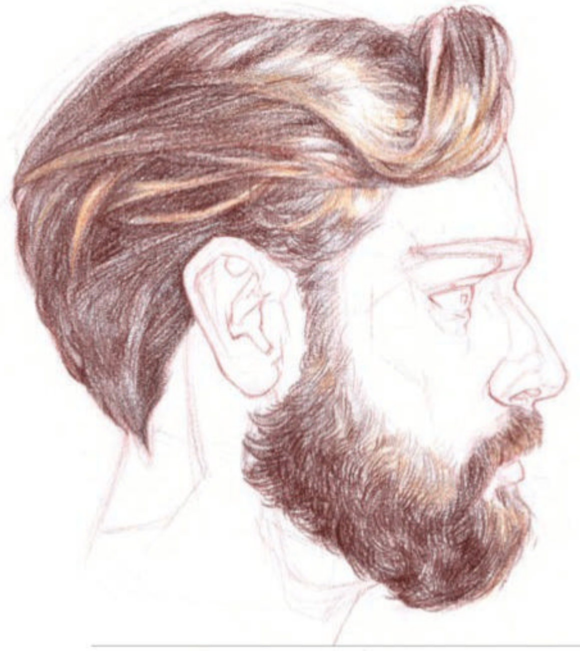




STEP 4: TONE

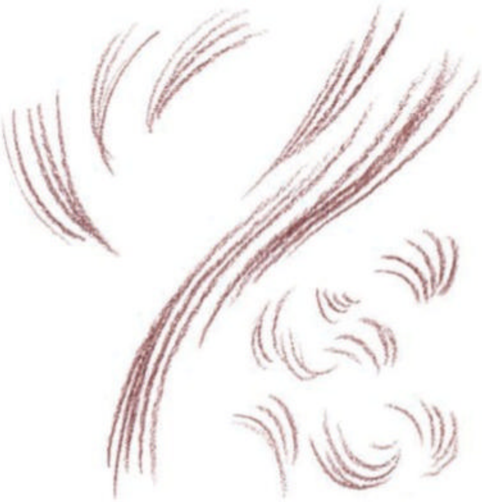
The language we use to describe hair can stand in the way of observational fidelity. If we believe we are drawing blonde hair we might imagine it to be uniformly pale and overlook at darker tones where it sits close to the face. Conversely, we can fail to recognise the bright highlights in hair we 'know' to be black. Draw what you see, looking first for tonal shapes before adding further some underlying tonal marks.

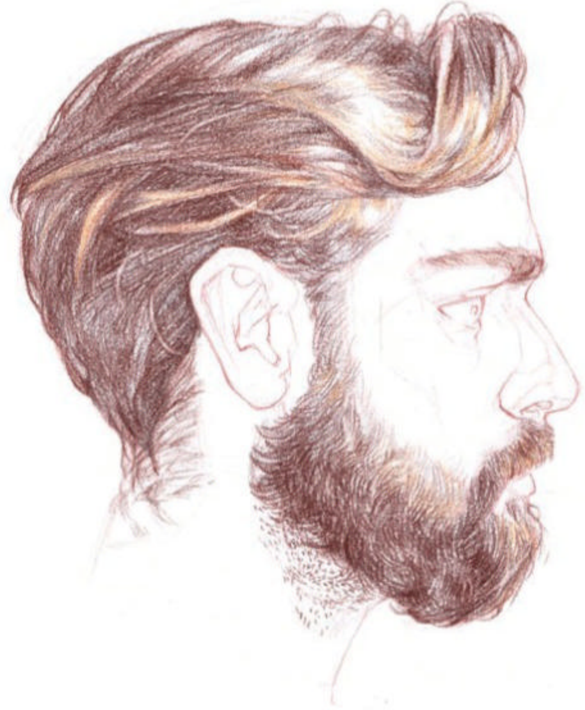




STEP 5: TEXTURE

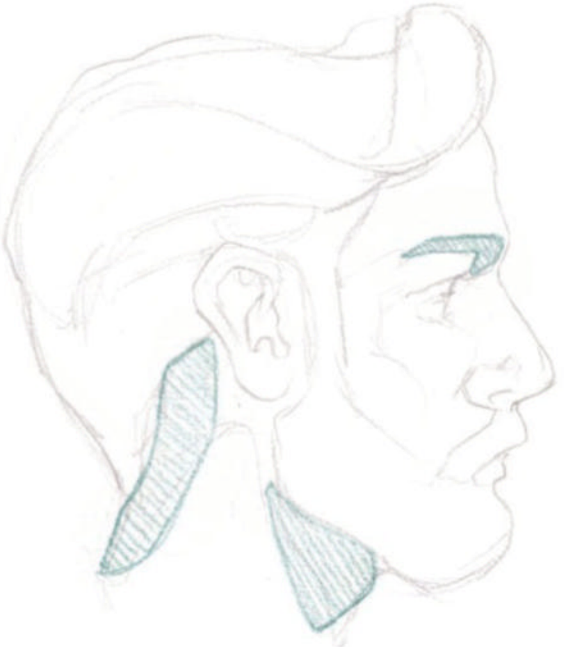
Hair texture and tone can be established at the same time, depending on the needs of the drawing and the time you have to make it. If you establish an initial layer of tone and colour in a drawing you can use directional marks that mimic the texture of the hair as a kind of cross-hatching that will allow you to darken the hair while also describing its specific texture and direction. Imagine each mark to be a plucked hair from that part of the head – how would you make a mark to describe the shape of their hair?



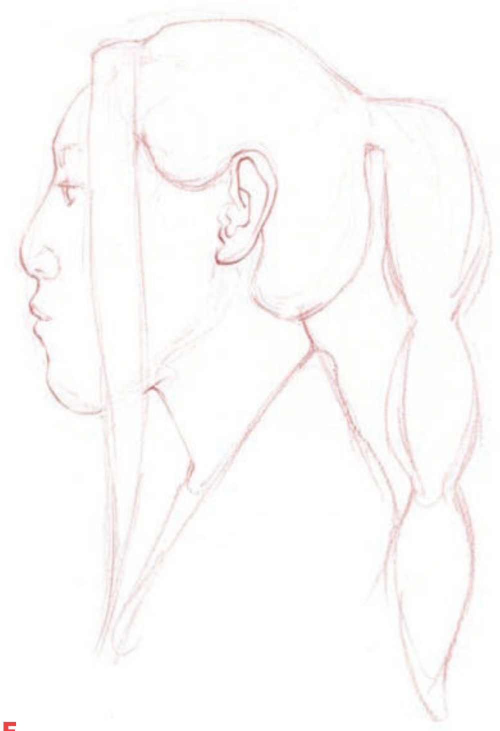


STEP 6: ENRICHMENTS

Much of the character of hair can be found in stray hairs at the boundary of the hairline, or the outer limit of the head; note these characterful enrichments to the hair study as a final touch once the rest of the drawing has been established. It often works best to draw in hair that sits over visible skin at this later stage too, finding suitable marks to describe the character and direction of stubble, or eyebrow hairs. ▶

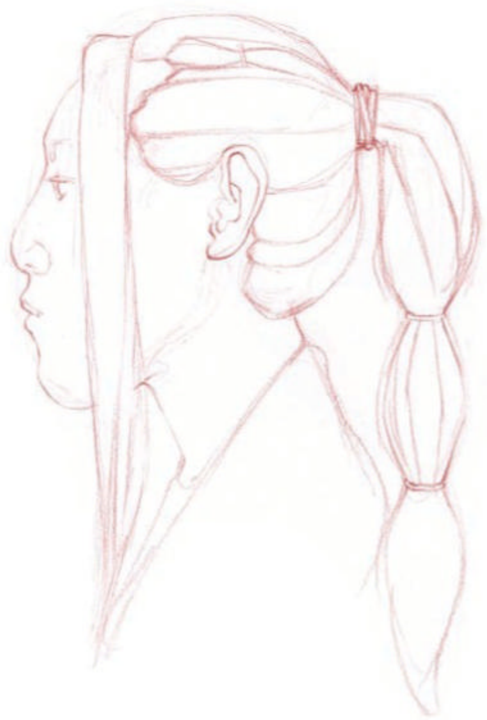


Jess' hair



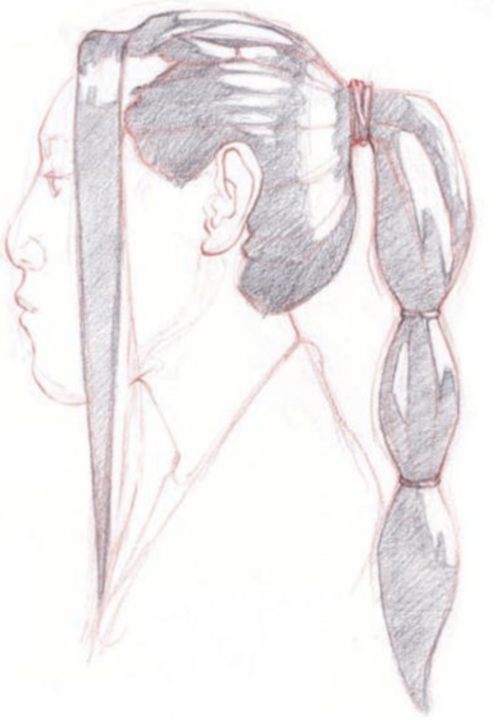
SHAPE

In this hairstyle, the overall shape of the model's hair diverges into styled strands at the front and a ponytail at the back, with the negative space between the neck and hair helping us to judge the hair shape.



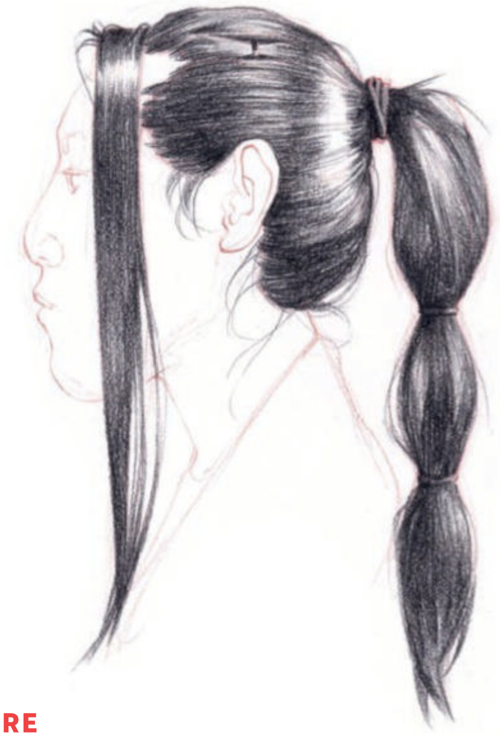
FLOW

Hair bands gather the hair, with the flow of hair directed towards those points of constriction.



TONE

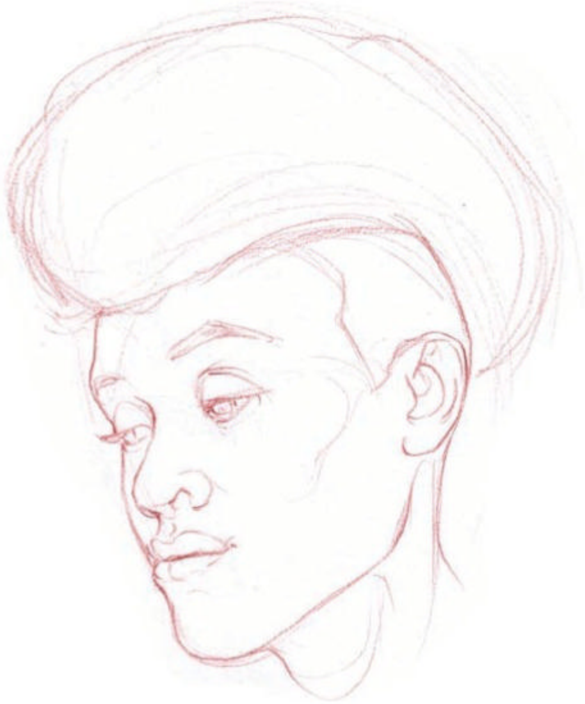
The reflection of the light source off of the hair creates bands of highlight, running contrary to the direction of the hair's flow.



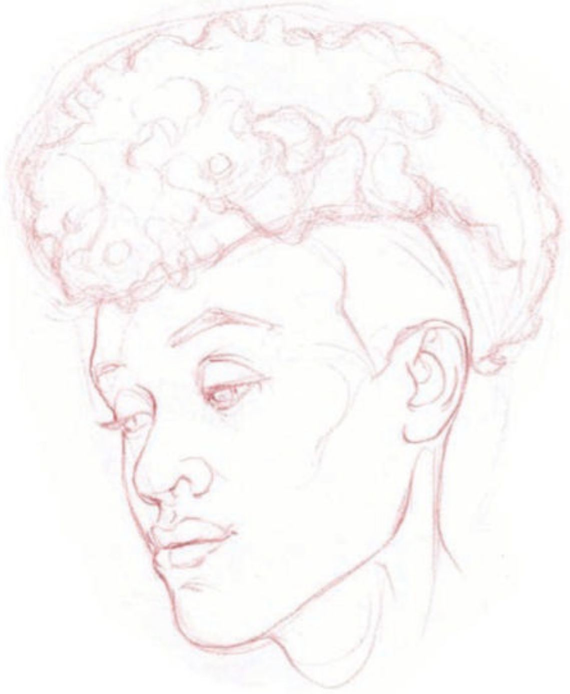
TEXTURE

Marks made in the direction of flow help to emphasise the direction dictated by the hairstyle, cut short at the bands of highlight to allow the white paper to show through. Stray hairs at boundaries help to give the drawing character.

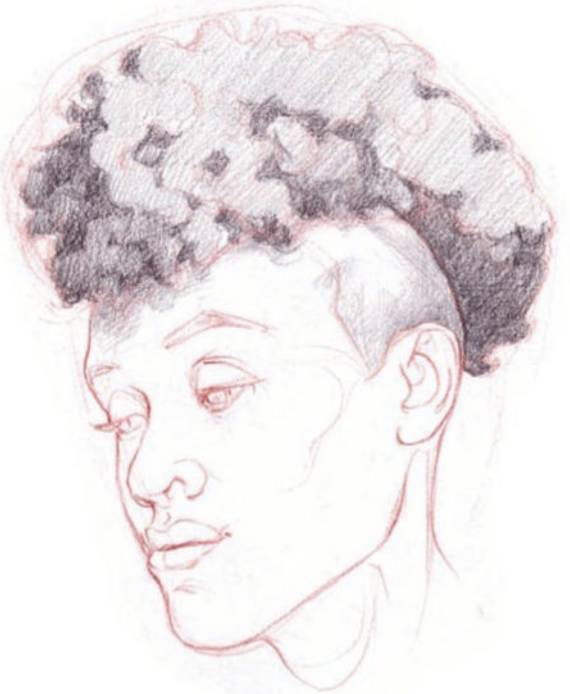
Sam's hair



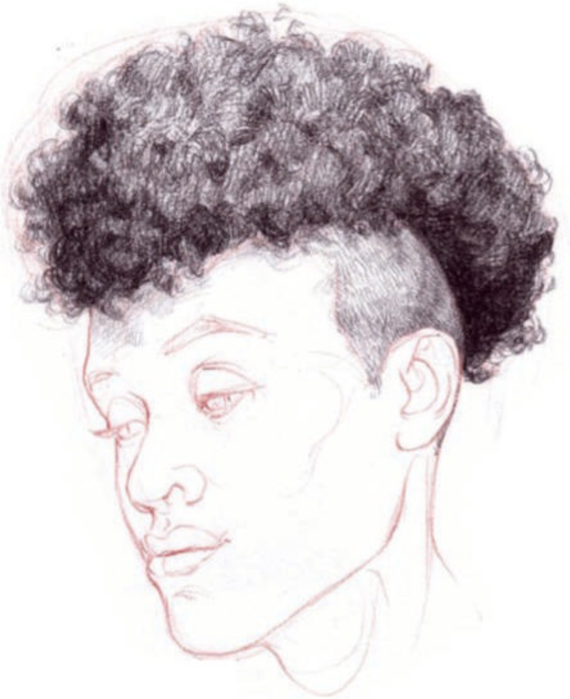
SHAPE
Even when the outer contour of the hair is ambiguous, its average shape can still be established. In this haircut, the shaved hair at the side of our model's head has been lightly delineated.



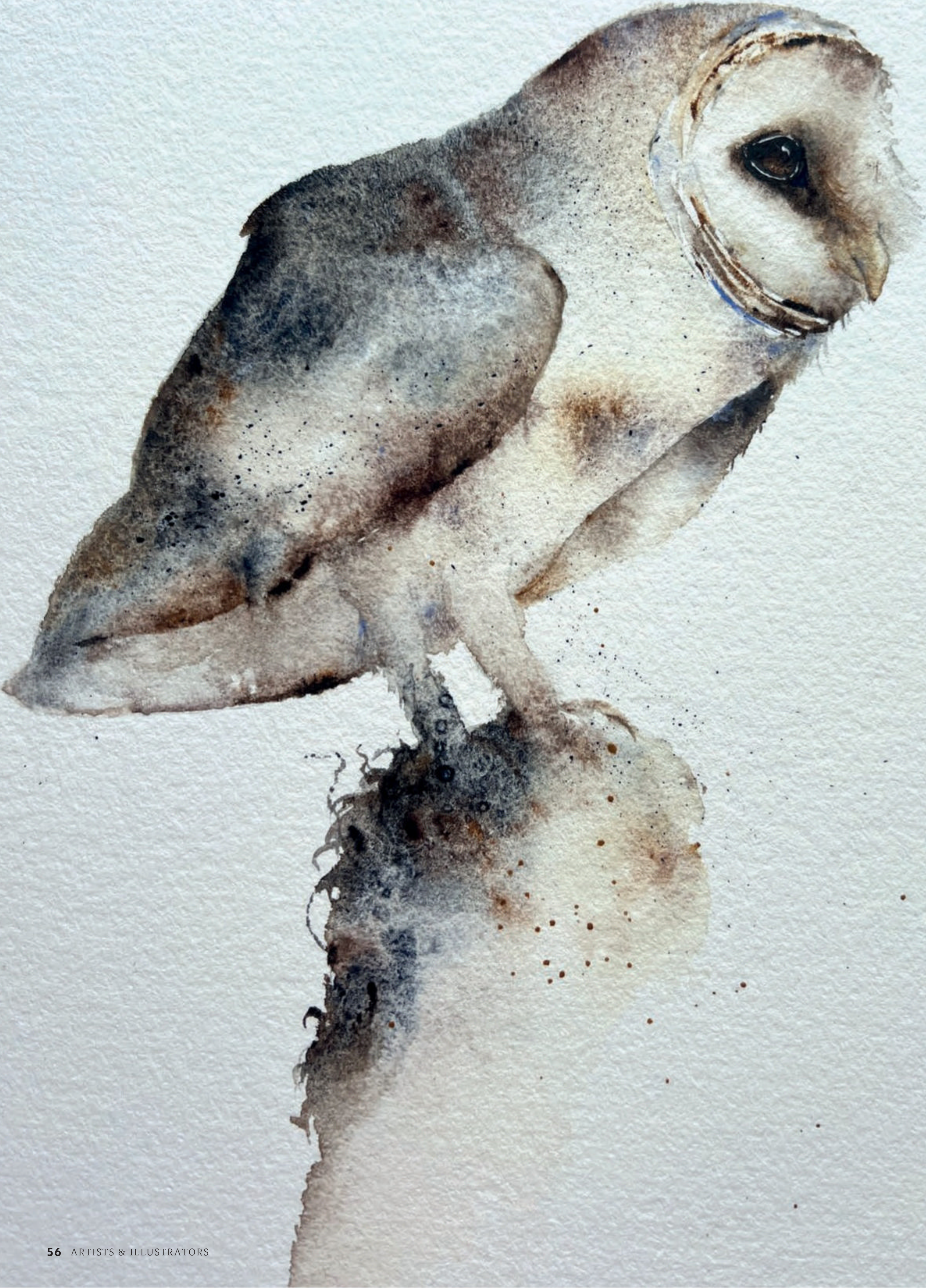
FLOW
With this haircut and the texture of the model's hair, the small clumps of grouped hair create areas of tone that can be separated into discreet shapes.



TONE
Directorial marks can help to establish a base of dark mid-tones while the shadow cast by the hair onto the model's forehead helps to emphasise the form of the hairstyle.



TEXTURE
Short, tight, curling marks layered over the base of tonal marks both darken the hair and emphasise texture. Short, straight dashes describe the shaved hair of the undercut while textural marks at the boundaries of hair create character. ◻



Owl art

Artist and teacher **JANE DAVIES** shows you how she created this beautiful barn owl in watercolour whilst being generous with her use of water

THE BARN OWL IS INCREDIBLY DISTINCTIVE, shrouded in mystery and legend. It's hard not to feel drawn to painting these magnificent birds and trying to capture that essence on paper. I'm fortunate enough to see them regularly, and when I do, I just have to stop and stare and simply wonder at them. That touch with nature is a magical thing.

When back in my studio painting, I love to use a lot of water in my watercolours; this allows the paint to flow and blend, creating magic on the paper. I typically like the granulating paints, which I use straight out of the tube, giving me fabulous strength of colour and ease of use, making the most of each painting's unique colour and character. A tidy work area is essential for me; it opens up my mind and allows for some clarity. This mindfulness allows me to gently watch the paint as it spreads across the paper, enabling me to tilt and adjust as necessary, fully engaged in the creative experience. This combination has it all for me: light, looseness and texture, as well as a wonderful feeling of mindfulness.

janedavieswatercolours.co.uk

JANE'S MATERIALS

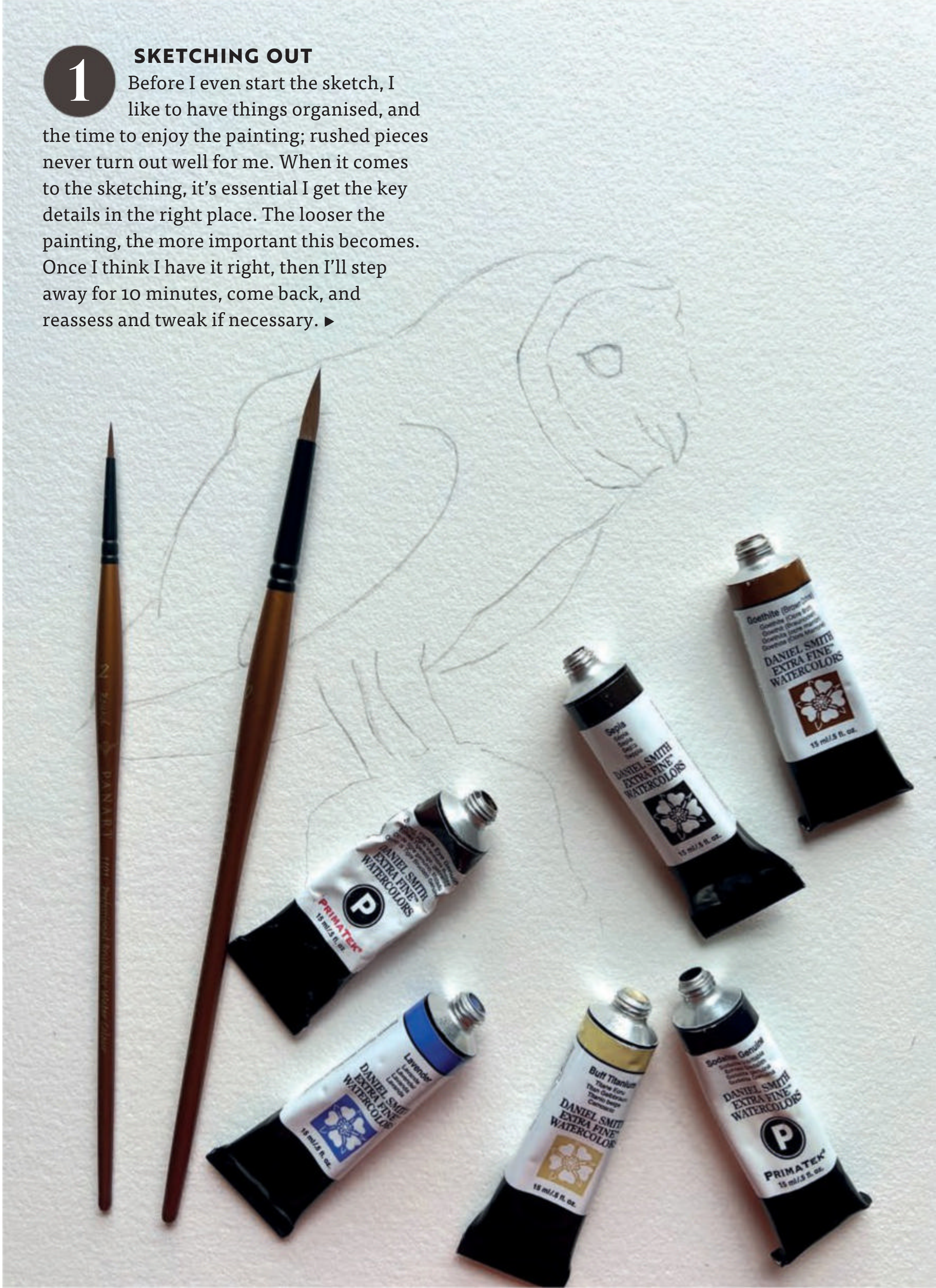
Paper
Bockingford 200lb NOT

Paint
Daniel Smith's granulating tube paints: Goethite (Brown Ochre), Lavender, Buff Titanium Sodalite Genuine, Sepia

Brushes
Panart round size 10
Panart round size 2

1 SKETCHING OUT

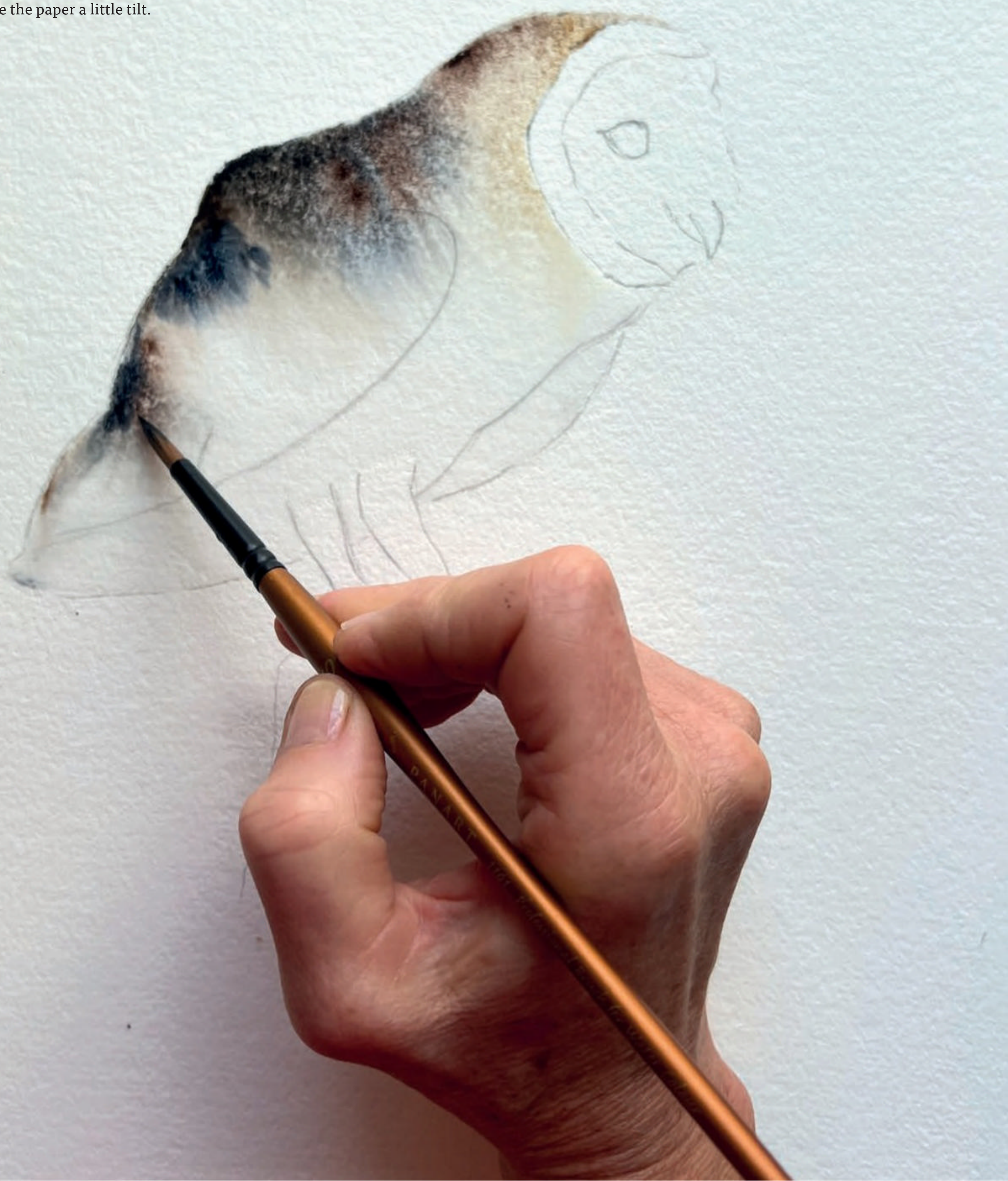
Before I even start the sketch, I like to have things organised, and the time to enjoy the painting; rushed pieces never turn out well for me. When it comes to the sketching, it's essential I get the key details in the right place. The looser the painting, the more important this becomes. Once I think I have it right, then I'll step away for 10 minutes, come back, and reassess and tweak if necessary. ▸

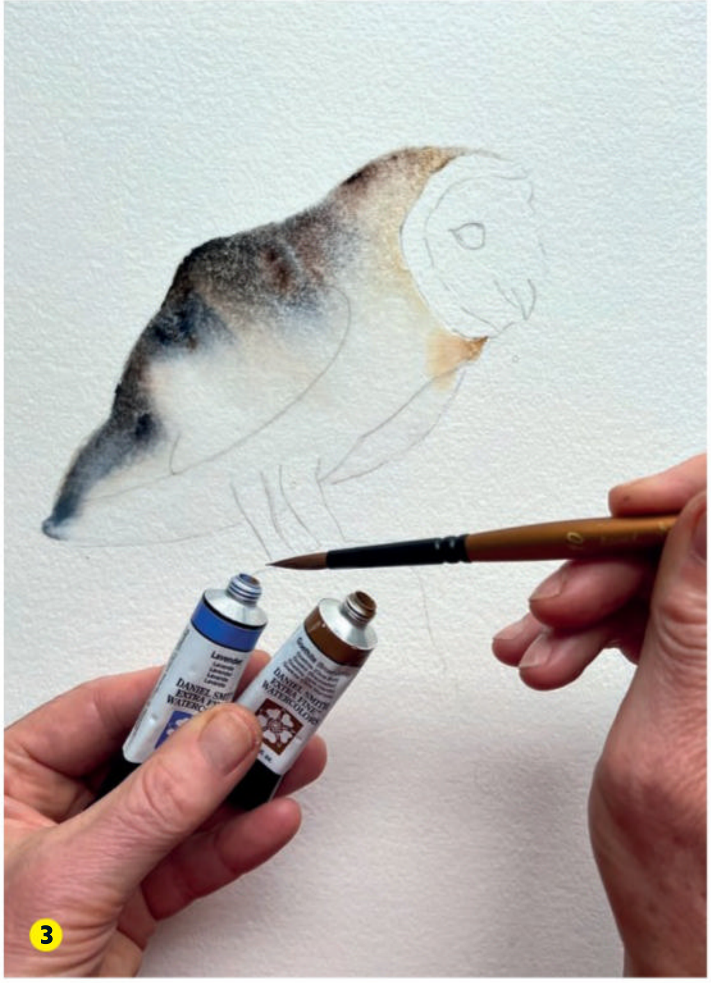


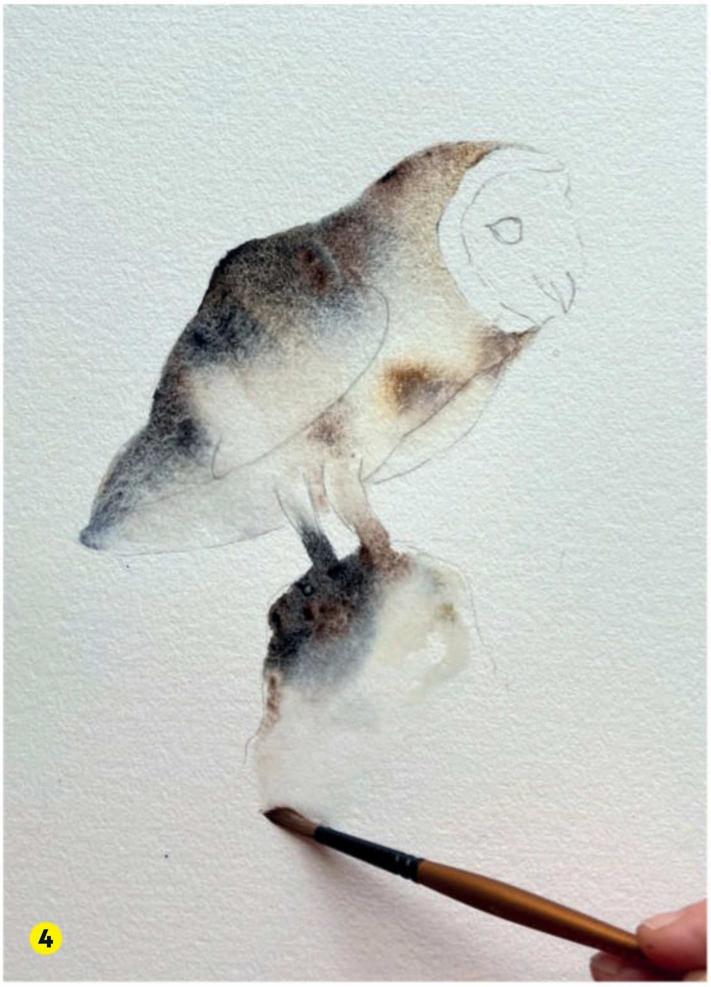
2

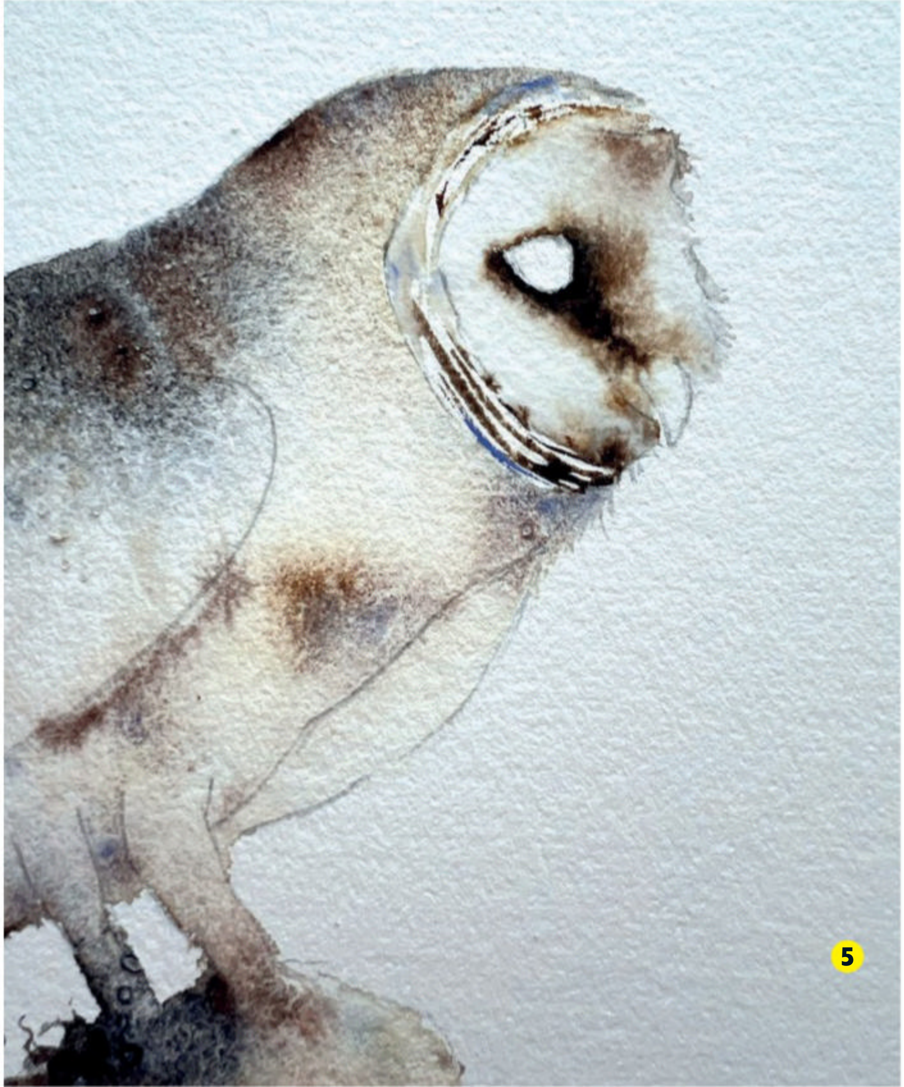
THE MAGIC OF MOVEMENT

I simply wet the whole barn owl up to that lovely heart-shaped ruff using plenty of water. Now, I'll place the paint at the very top and allow it to move down the body, using the lighter colours towards the front and the stronger colours towards the tail, all the while allowing the paint to move of its own accord. If the paint isn't moving sufficiently, I'll give the paper a little tilt.









3 A LITTLE BIT HERE AND THERE

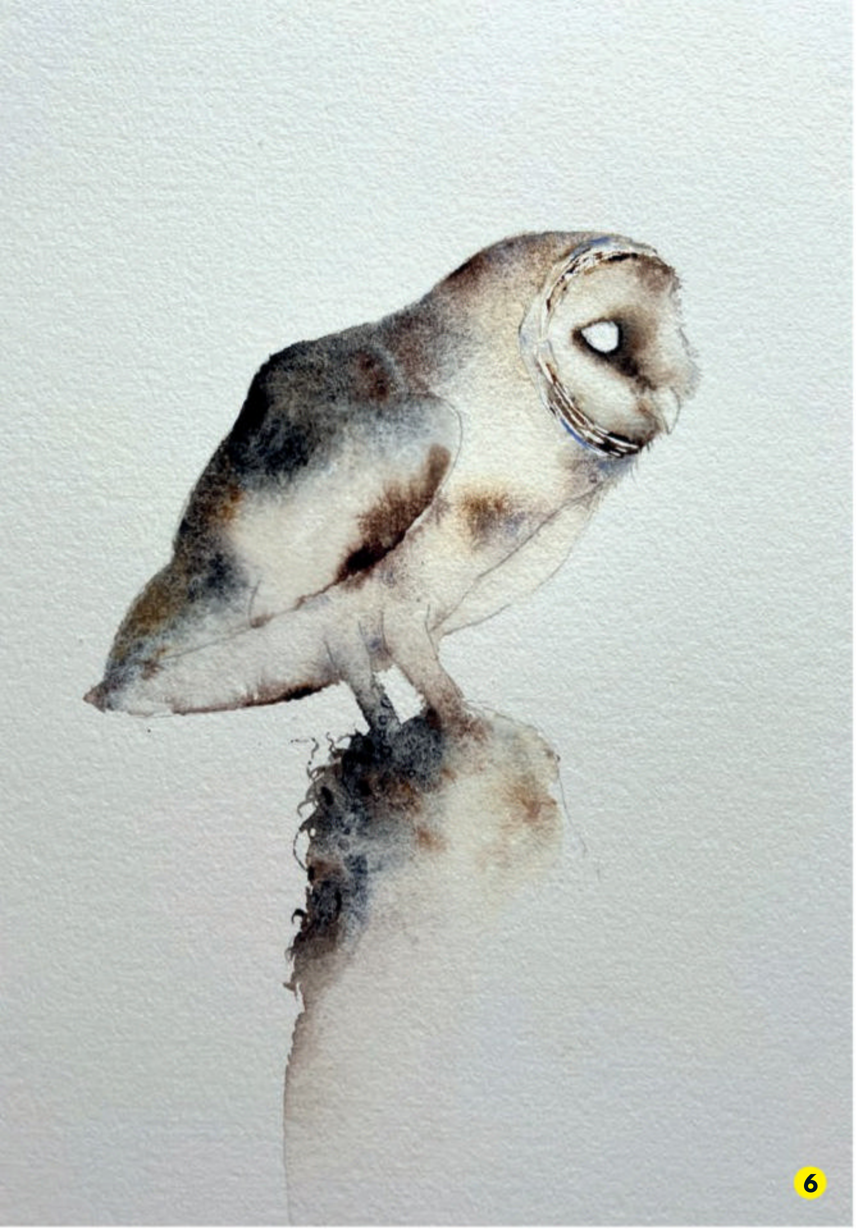
While the paper is still wet, I'll pop a little colour on the underside against the heart-shaped ruff, a touch on the chest and lower tail. Here, I'll use multiple colours on top of one another but go gentle the whole time.

4 BE BOLD

This is one of my favourite bits. I'll wet the legs and tree stump, allowing any colour from the body to run down the legs. I'll continue to boldly add darker colours to the left-hand side of the stump and allow the paint to blend and move of its own accord. At this stage, I'm going to add a little salt to the tree stump and upper body and let it dry.

5 GENTLY DOES IT

With a nice wet brush, I'll cover the head and go carefully around the eye, leaving a tiny dry line all the way around. Also, I'll miss out the ruff. I'll add some light colours to the top and bottom, with my darker colours circling the eye. Switching to a smaller brush and mixed colours, I'll randomly do sweeps into the ruff. ▶



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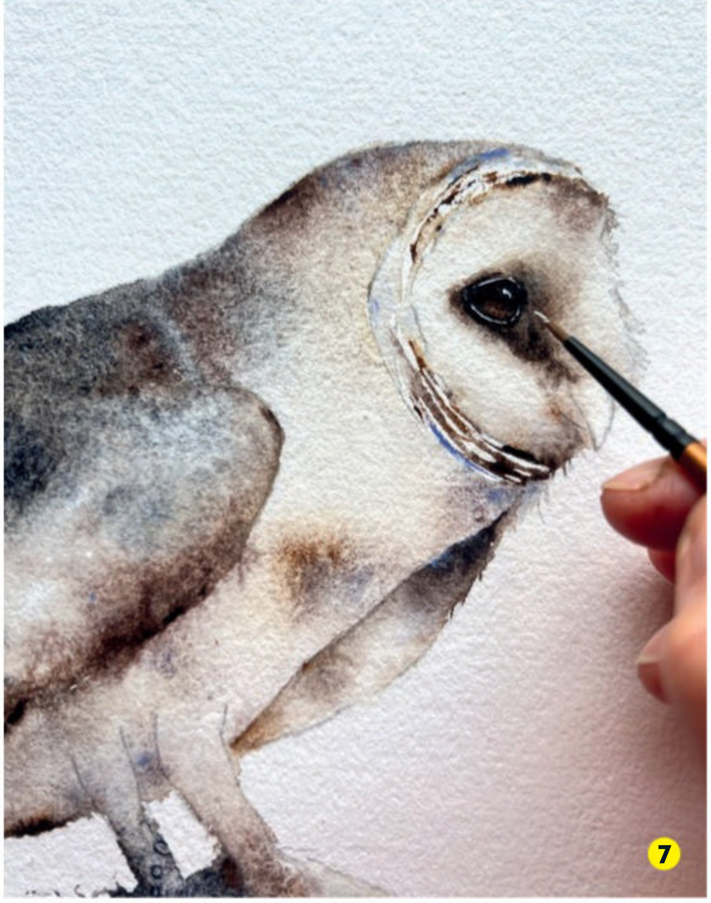

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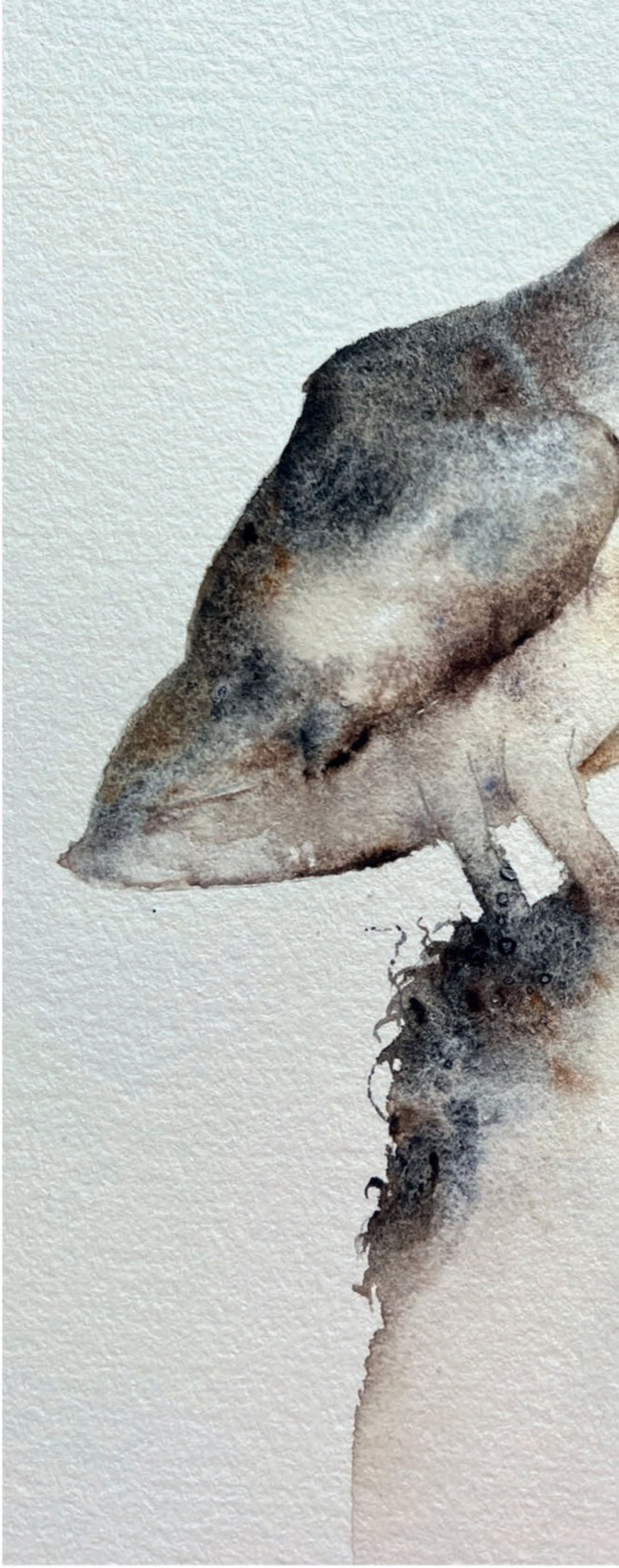

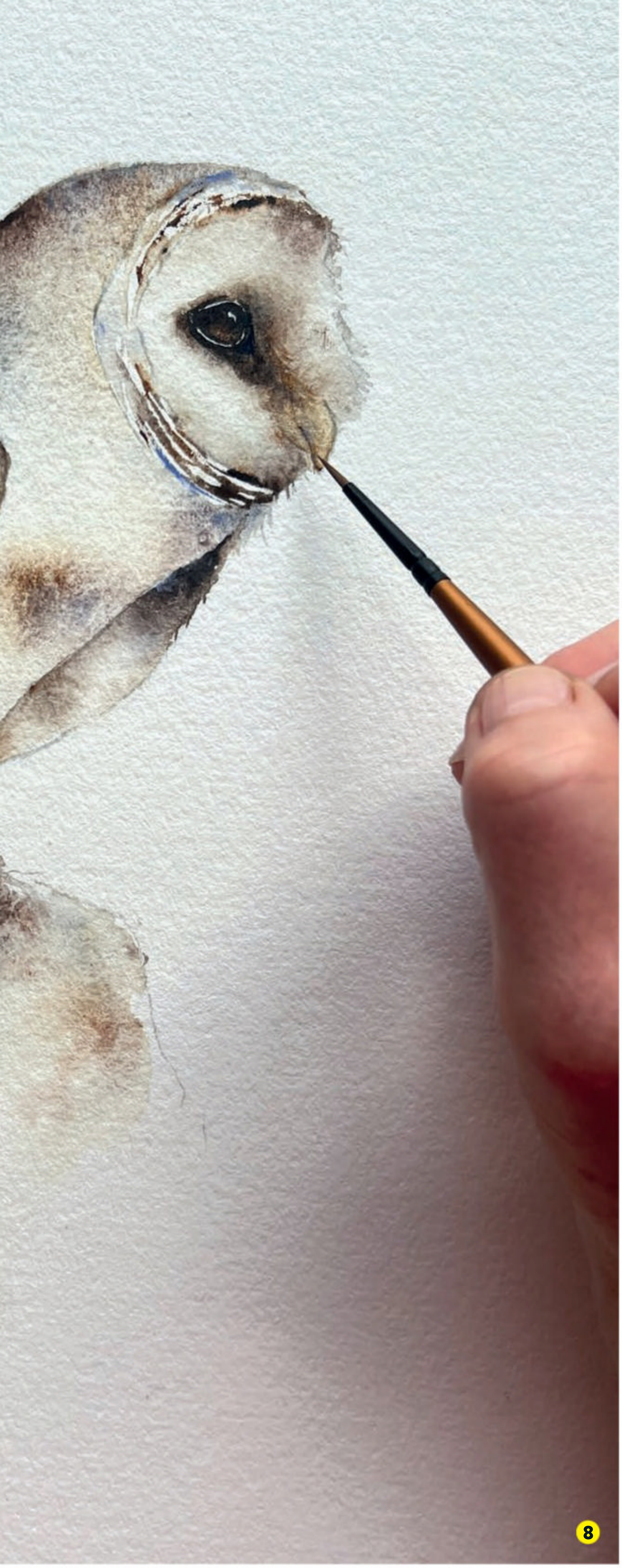

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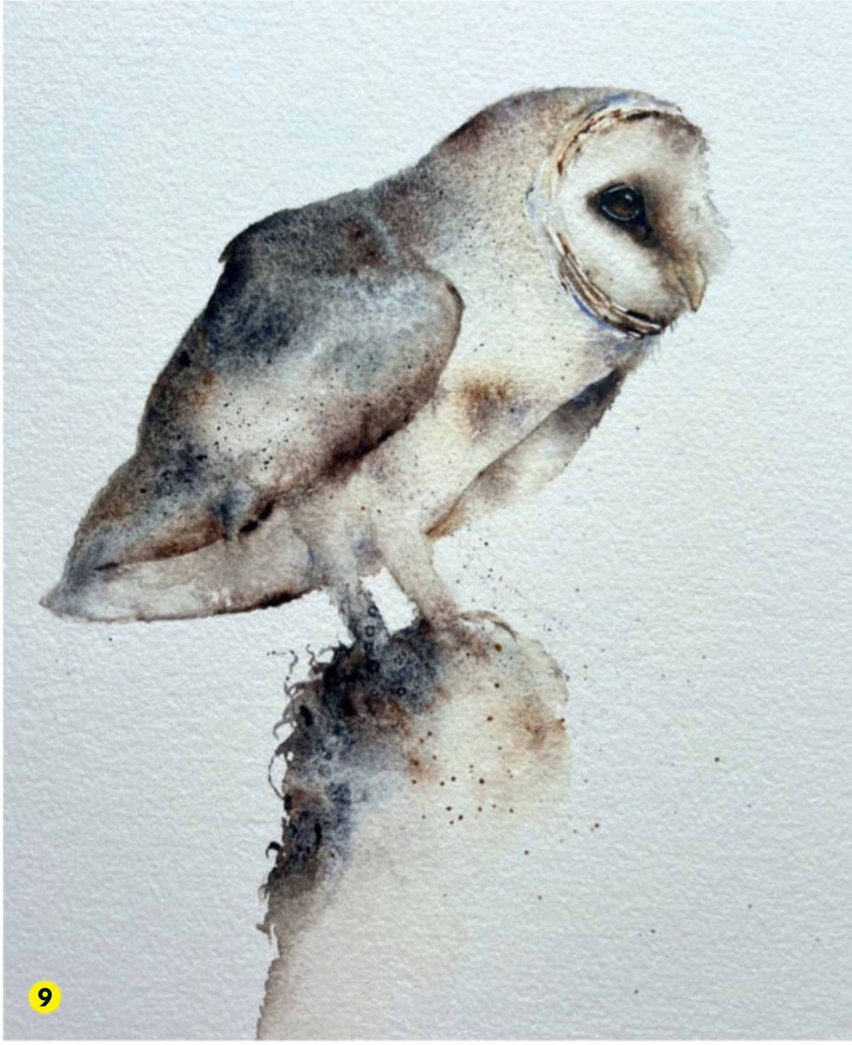

9

6 ADDING ANOTHER LAYING

Now, I'm going to wet the upper and lower wings but, first, brush any salt away. For the upper wing, I'll add my darker colours to the bottom and a little to the top. Onto the lower wing, I will simply add a hint of colour at the very top giving it a tilt to fill up the space.

7 EYE EYE!

Now, onto the all-important eye, where I will take my time. Using two darker colours on my brush at the same time, I simply paint the inside of the eye, making sure I keep that little white line all the way around. As it dries, I will gently take a little colour out of the lower part of the eye, then add the all-important white catchlight.

8 BEAK

This is another important area to get right, so I want to be accurate. I'll add a hint of colour to the top and bottom and highlight the join with a touch of dark. Once it's almost dry, I'll gently take a little colour out of the top section with a soft damp brush to give a highlight.

9 LAST TINKERS AND SPLATTERS

I'll gently brush away any remaining salt, adding a few flicks and splatters. To avoid getting these on the paper, I will mask the white paper with a cloth or kitchen roll. I won't be too precise. Then, once it's completely dry, I will carefully rub away any pencil marks. □

True blue

Using her signature medium of coloured pencil and pastel combined, **SEMA MARTIN** creates this polar bear in his icy, arctic environment

WINTER IS THE PERFECT SEASON to draw a polar bear, and this piece was inspired by the icy surroundings and dramatic lighting of this photograph. The unique interplay of light and shadow in this scene immediately caught my eye and offered the ideal challenge for an almost value-study approach on Pastelmat paper. The way the light dances across the polar bear's fur and the cool icy textures of the glacial cave provided an opportunity to explore depth, contrast and subtle colour transitions in a way that pushed my skills further.

I've been experimenting with Pastelmat paper lately, exploring its unique texture and versatility with both pastels and coloured pencils. This surface allows for lots of layering, and I enjoy finding new ways to push the boundaries of what's possible with these mediums. This drawing was also a great chance to practice more advanced colour theory techniques in my work. Using buttercup yellow Pastelmat as the base added a subtle yet vibrant contrast to the cool blues and whites of the polar bear, making the colours stand out while staying harmonious. Creating this piece allowed me to practice blending techniques, refine my understanding of lighting and challenge myself artistically.
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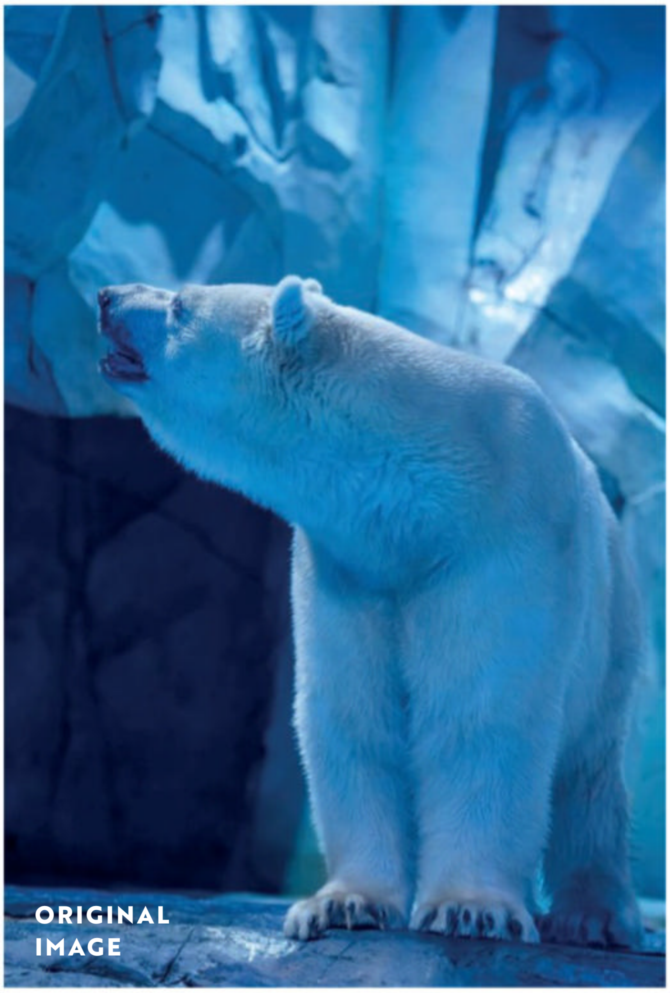


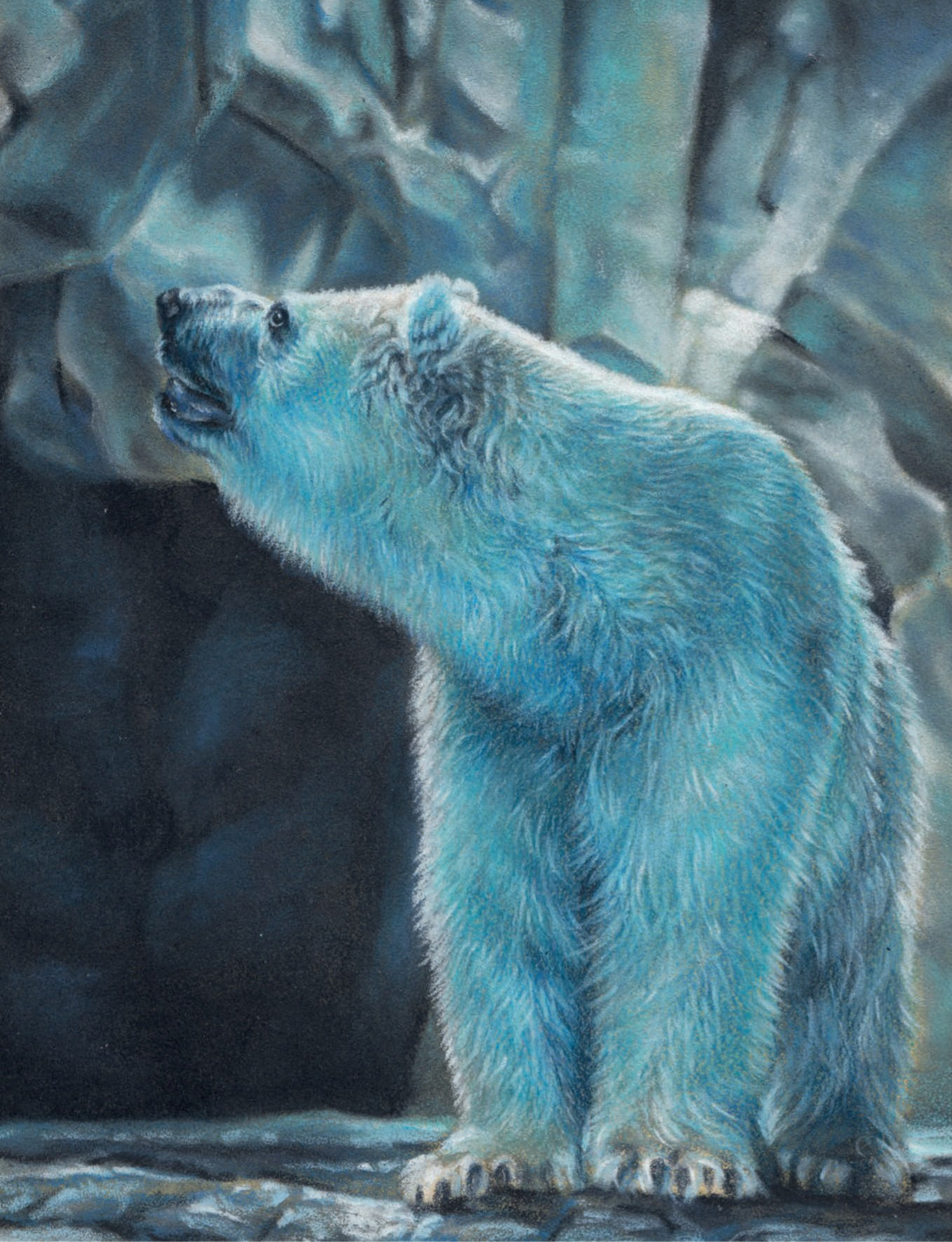
ORIGINAL IMAGE

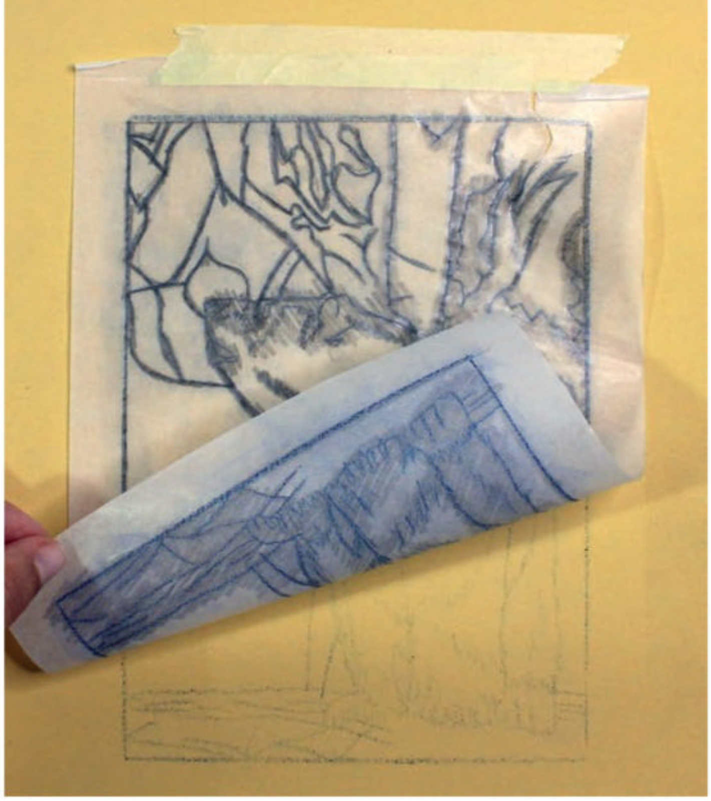
SEMA'S MATERIALS

Pastels
PanPastels: Ultramarine Blue, Turquoise, Payne's Grey, Black, White

Coloured pencils
Caran d'Ache Luminance: Ultramarine, Ice Blue, Light Cobalt Blue, Genuine Cobalt Blue, Silver Grey, Grey Blue, White, Raw Umber 50%
Faber-Castell Polychromos: Indigo, Phthalo Blue, Light Cobalt Turquoise

Support
Paper: Buttercup Yellow Pastelmat Paper
Sofft Tools Palette Knife and Sponges
Winsor & Newton Fixative
Graphite Pencil
Ruler ▸

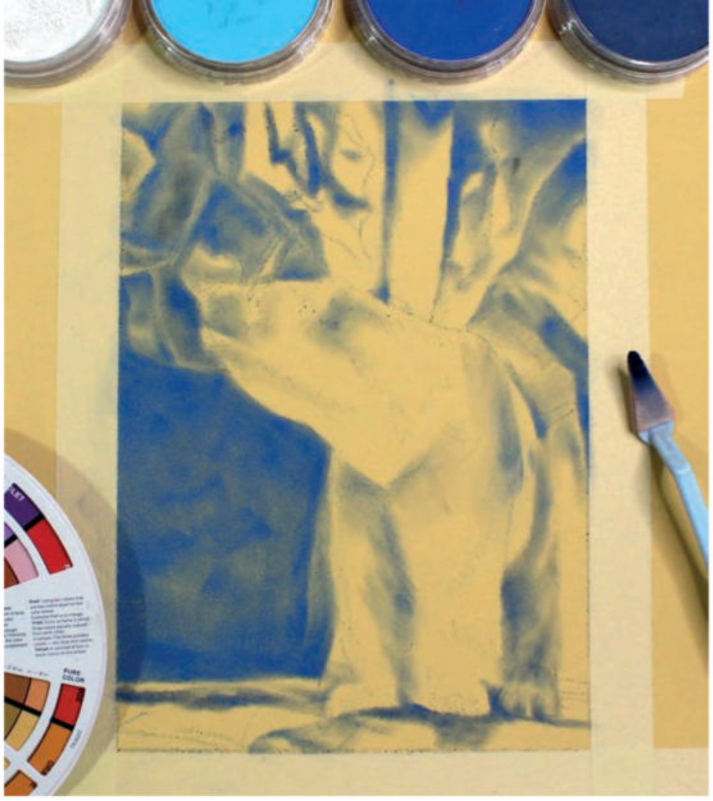




1

TRANSFERRING THE OUTLINE

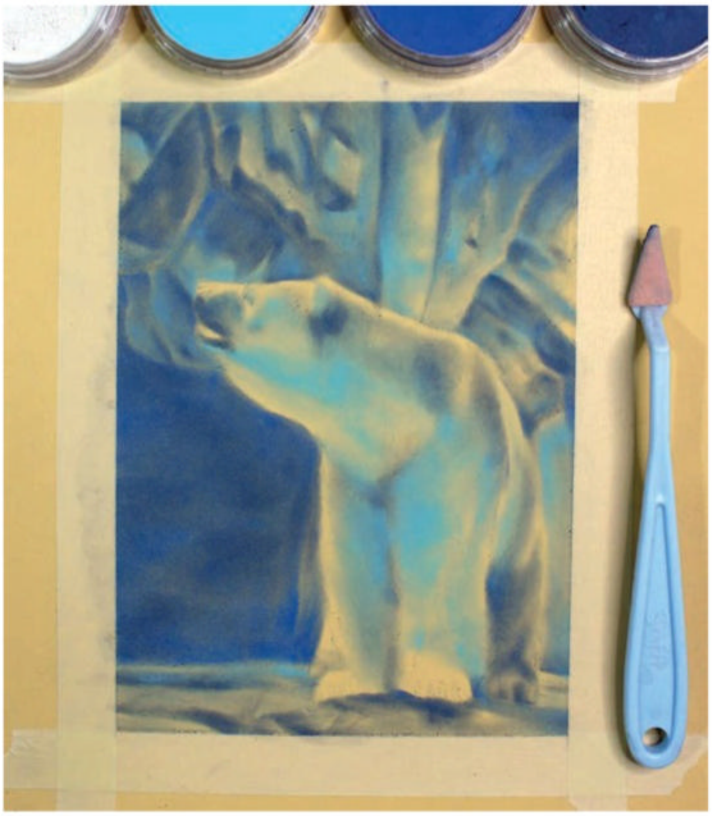
I start by tracing the reference image onto the buttercup yellow Pastelmat paper using transfer paper. For the outline, I use a regular graphite pencil for the top portion and a Caran d'Ache Ultramarine pencil for the bottom. This approach makes sure the blue tone blends seamlessly into the drawing later on, creating a cohesive base for the ice cave and polar bear.



2

BLOCKING IN MID-TONES AND SHADOWS

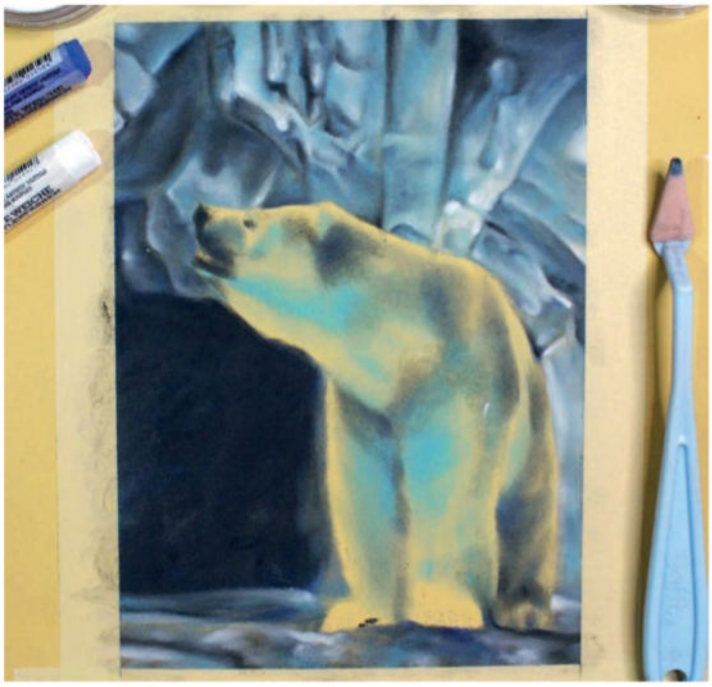
With the outline in place, I use Ultramarine PanPastel and a Sofft tool to block in the mid-tones and darker areas. Treating the image like a value study, I focus on building the depth and structure of the scene. I apply a small amount of pigment at a time, pressing it into the tooth of the paper with the sponge to achieve smooth, even coverage. This step sets the tonal foundation for the icy cave and polar bear.



3

ADDING ADDITIONAL COLOURS AND TONES

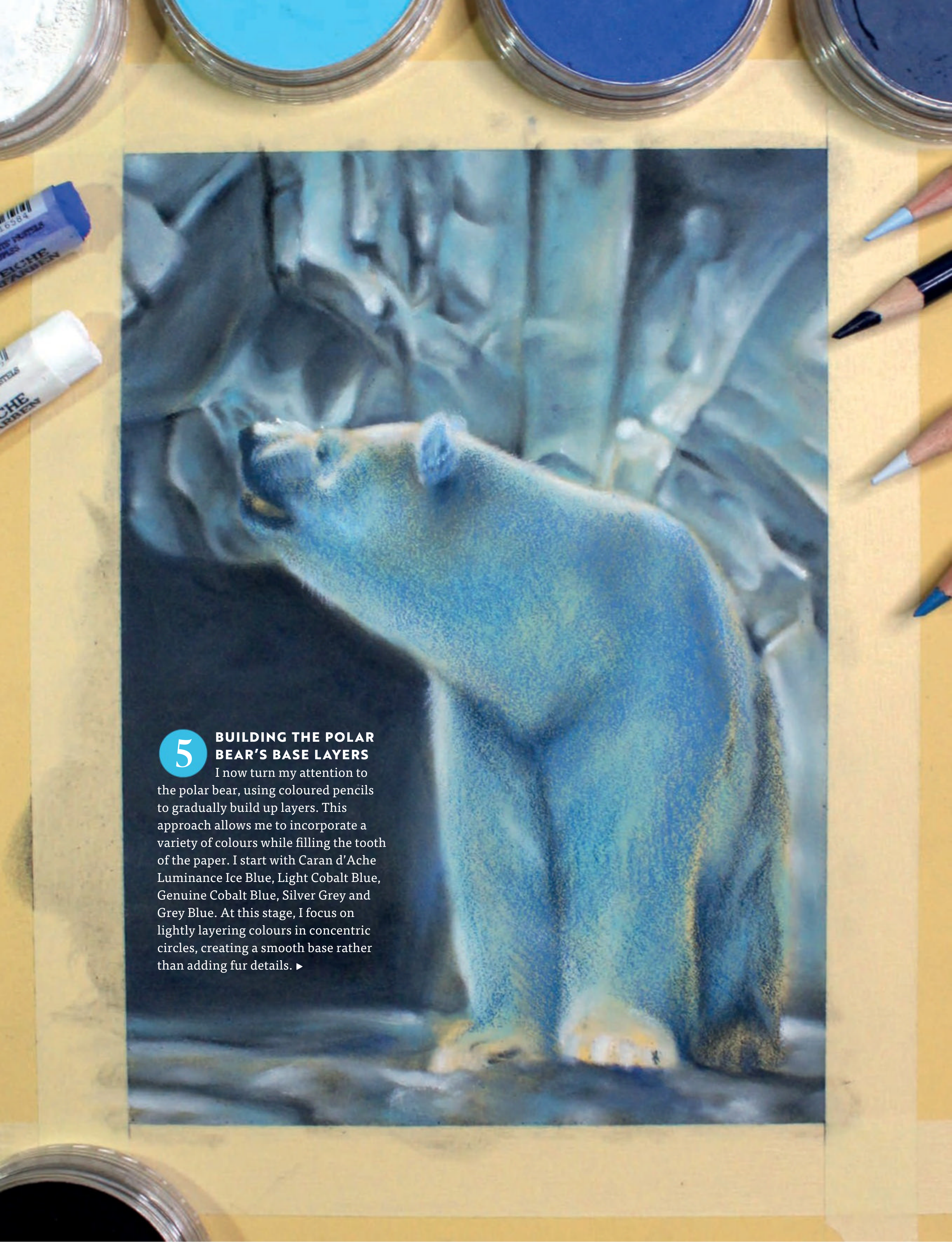
I move onto blocking in the remaining obvious colours and tones using Turquoise and Payne's Grey PanPastels. Referring closely to my reference photo, I carefully apply these colours to define the cool, icy hues of the cave and the shadowed areas of the polar bear. This thoughtful layering begins to establish the contrasts and atmospheric depth of the scene.



4

DEFINING SHAPES WITH BLACK AND WHITE PANPASTELS

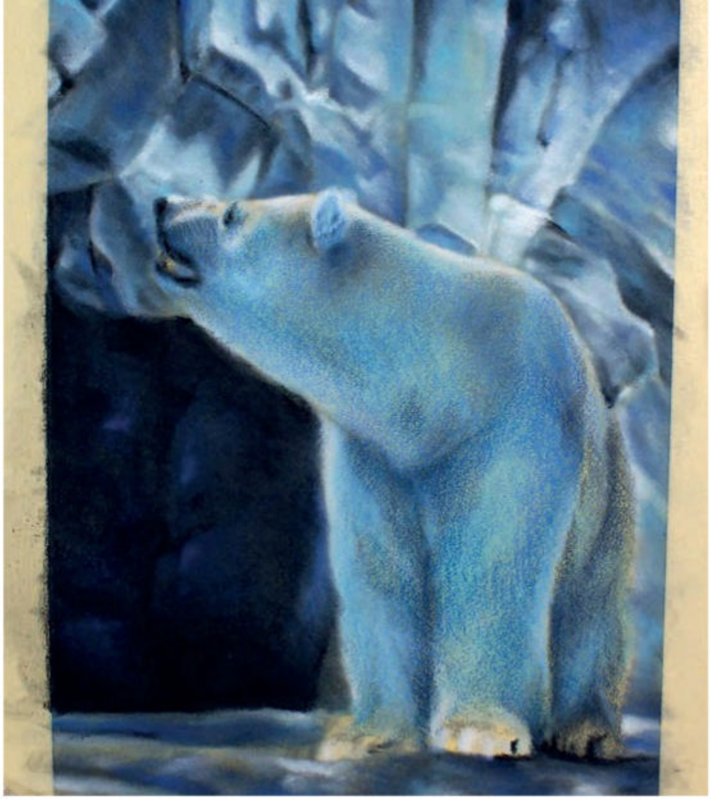
Now, I bring the scene to life by adding Black and White PanPastels. These colours enhance the contrast and realism, adding depth to the icy textures. Referring closely to the reference image, I carefully map out each shape within the ice cave, using a palette knife Sofft tool to carve out intricate formations. Since this is an unfocused background, I avoid adding too many details, and the combination of pastel and the palette knife creates a slightly blurred effect. I continually switch between PanPastel colours, blending and layering to build the background.



5

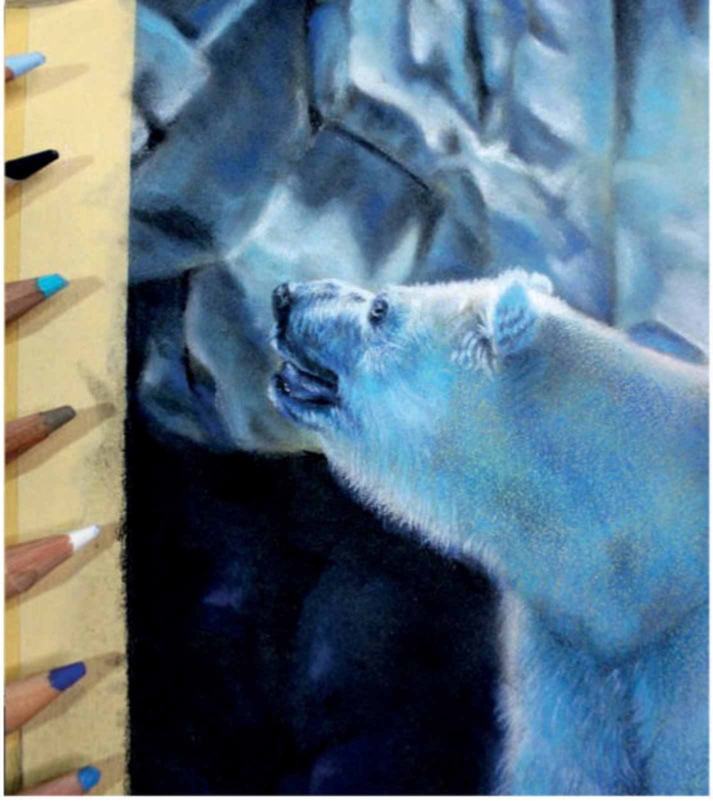
BUILDING THE POLAR BEAR'S BASE LAYERS

I now turn my attention to the polar bear, using coloured pencils to gradually build up layers. This approach allows me to incorporate a variety of colours while filling the tooth of the paper. I start with Caran d'Ache Luminance Ice Blue, Light Cobalt Blue, Genuine Cobalt Blue, Silver Grey and Grey Blue. At this stage, I focus on lightly layering colours in concentric circles, creating a smooth base rather than adding fur details. ▸



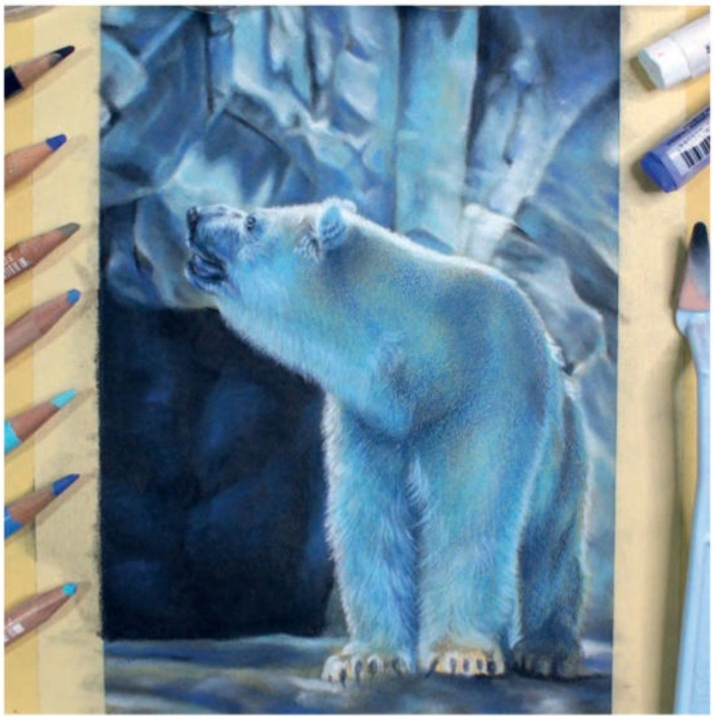
6 ENHANCING CONTRAST IN THE BACKGROUND

With the base layers of the polar bear complete, I return to the background to refine the contrast. I darken the shadowed areas and brighten the highlights to emphasise the dramatic interplay of light and shadow seen in the reference image. Contrast is key to realism and in this drawing, where the lighting is so dynamic, it is especially important to get it right. These adjustments make sure the ice cave complements the polar bear and adds depth to the composition.



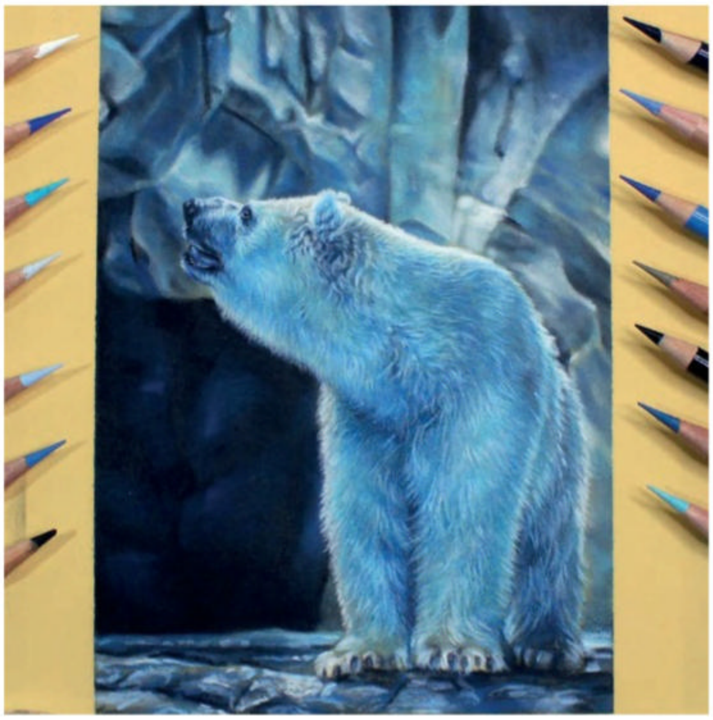
7 ADDING FUR DETAILS TO THE POLAR BEAR

Starting with the face of the polar bear, I gradually add details using Faber-Castell Polychromos Indigo for the darkest areas, Phthalo Blue for the mid-tones, and Light Cobalt Turquoise for the lighter areas. For the lightest highlights, I use Caran d'Ache Luminance White. The Polychromos pencils are ideal for blending the layers together seamlessly and for gently glazing colours over the top.



8 REFINING THE POLAR BEAR'S BODY

Now that the polar bear's face is complete, I move on to finish the rest of its body, focusing primarily on colour transitions and values rather than fine details. Using Polychromos pencils, I create a beautifully blended base layer, which makes it easy to layer a few light hairs over the top in key areas. I constantly refer to my reference photo to determine which sections need the most detail to make a real impact on the drawing. For some of the lighter areas, I introduce Caran d'Ache Raw Umber 50%, which adds a beautiful contrast to the Indigo tones and warms up the highlights.



9 FINAL ADJUSTMENTS AND FINISHING TOUCHES

Using my palette knife Sofft tool, I roughly add the ice floor with loose, textured marks, concentrating on shadows and highlights to create depth in just a few minutes. Before adding any final touches, I spray the piece with Winsor & Newton Fixative to prevent any further blending of the layers. Once dried, I refine the highlights using my Caran d'Ache Luminance White pencil, adding crisp details to complete the icy textures. ▫

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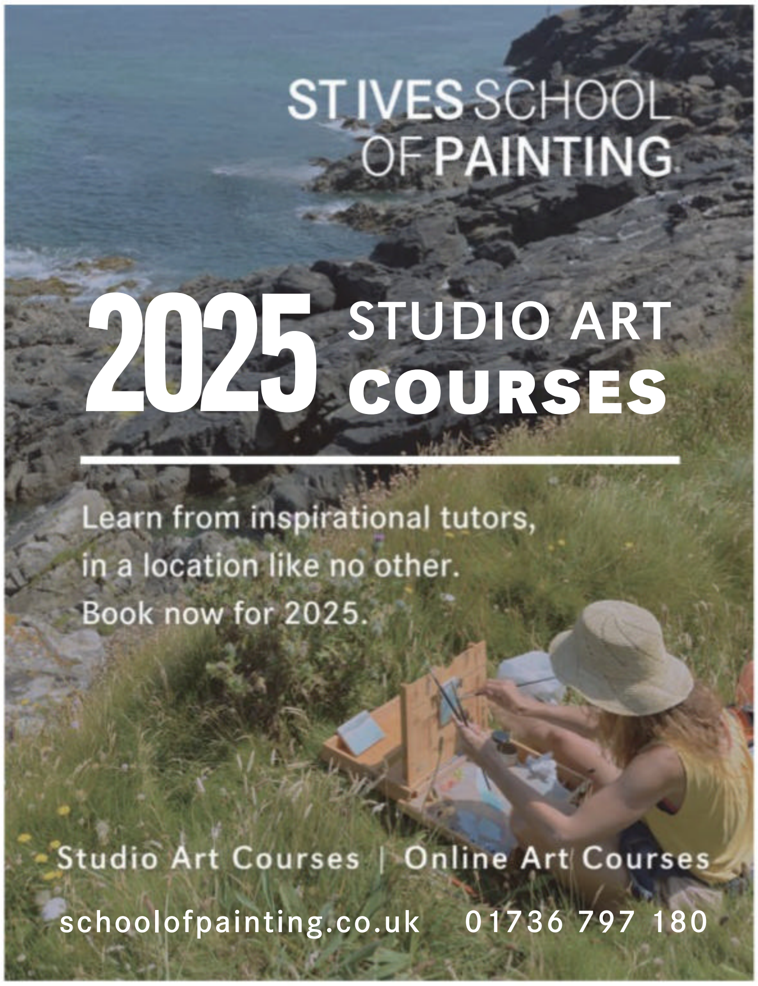

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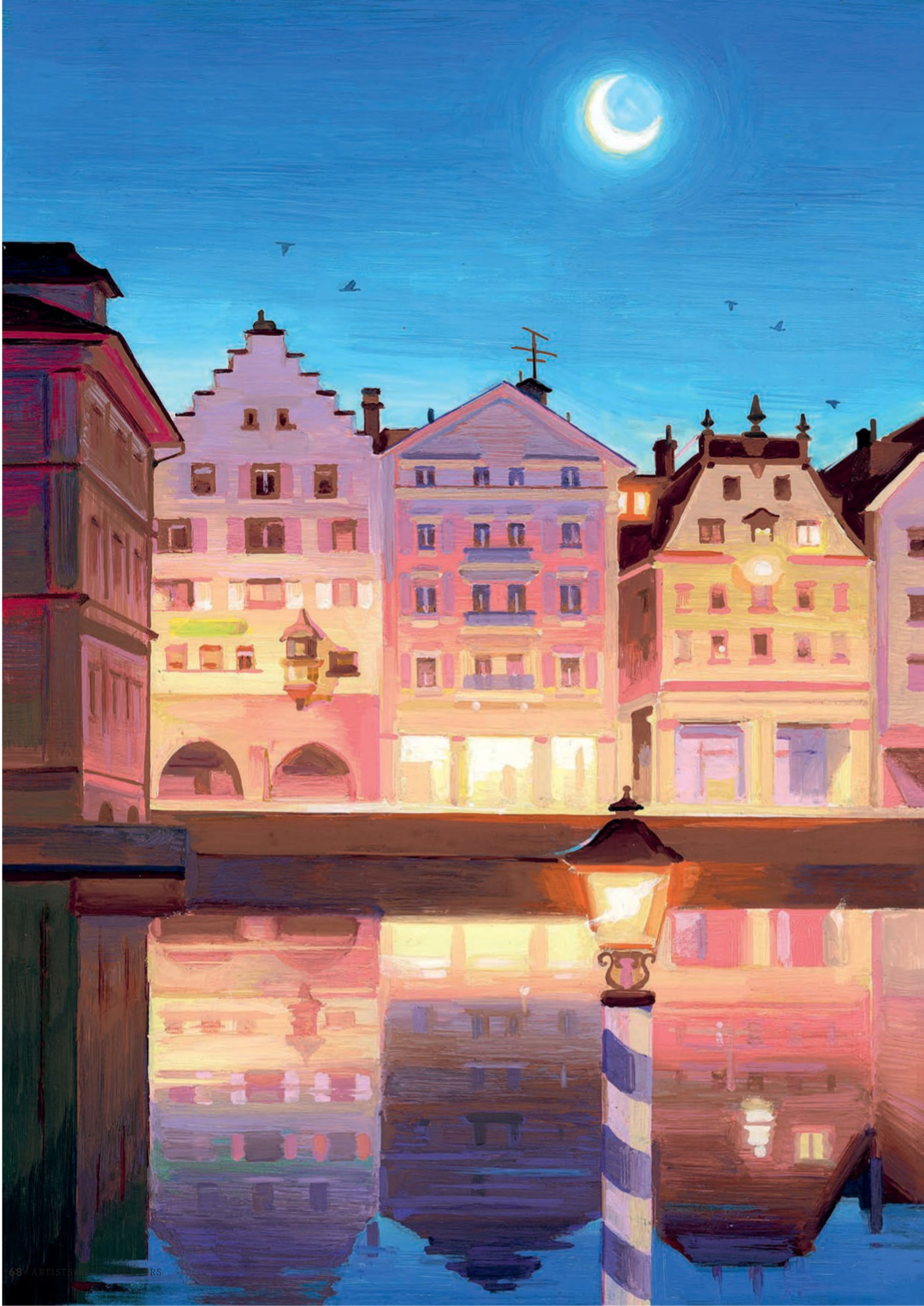

Zürich at twilight

In an exclusive extract from her new book *Art With Markers*, Chinese-Canadian artist **ANGELA PAN** shows you how she created this tranquil waterside scene using Posca pens

ANGELA'S MATERIALS

Posca pens
Colours: Lavender, Light Pink, Light Orange, Ivory, Coral pink, White, Beige, Apricot, Powder Pastel, Light Blue, Sky Blue, Turquoise, Brown, Dark Brown
Sizes: extra-fine tip 0.7mm–1mm, fine tip 0.9mm–1.3mm, medium tip 1.8mm–2.5mm, broad bullet tip 4.5mm–5.5mm, broad chisel tip 5.5.mm–8mm

Support
Blank-coated cardstock paper
HB pencil
Eraser
Washi tape

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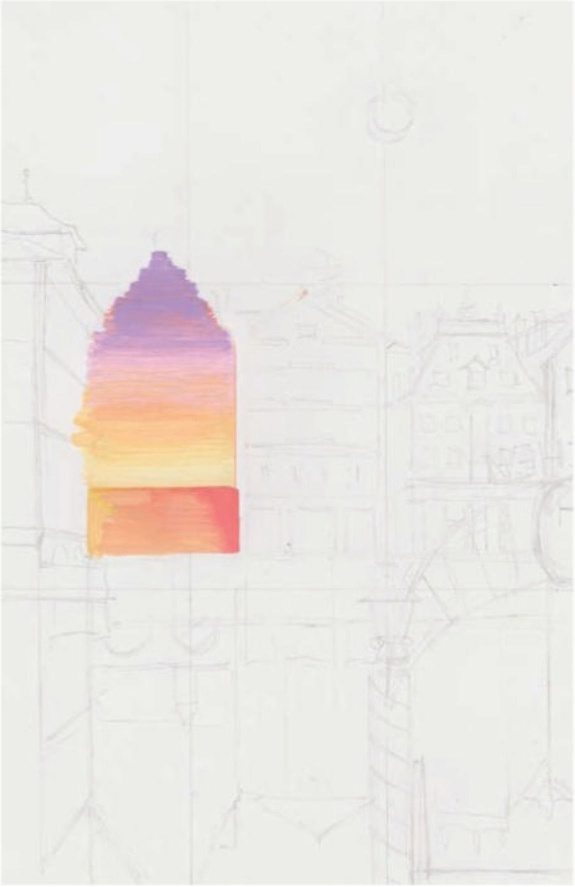
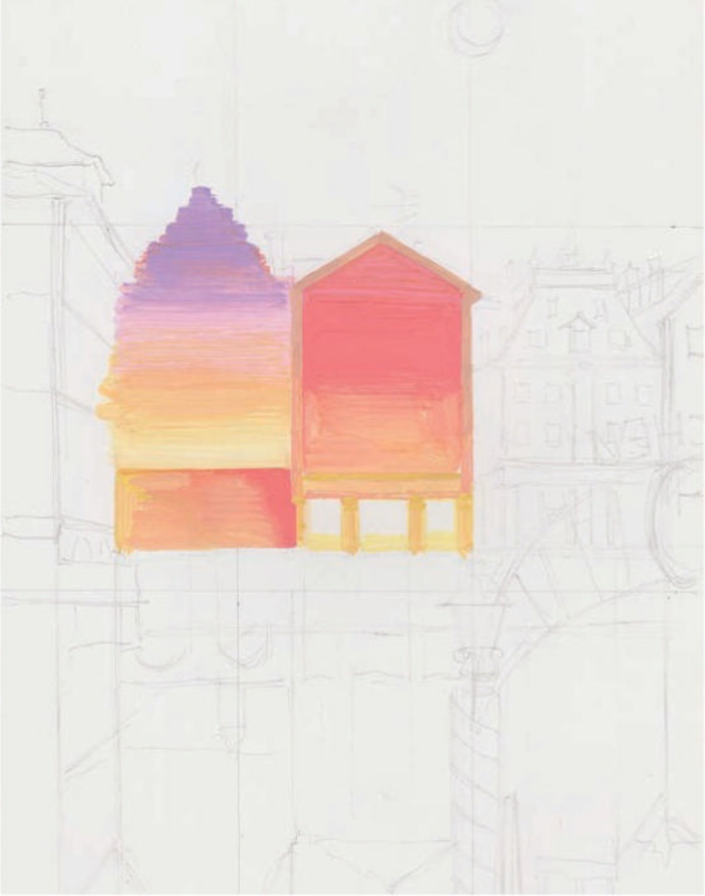
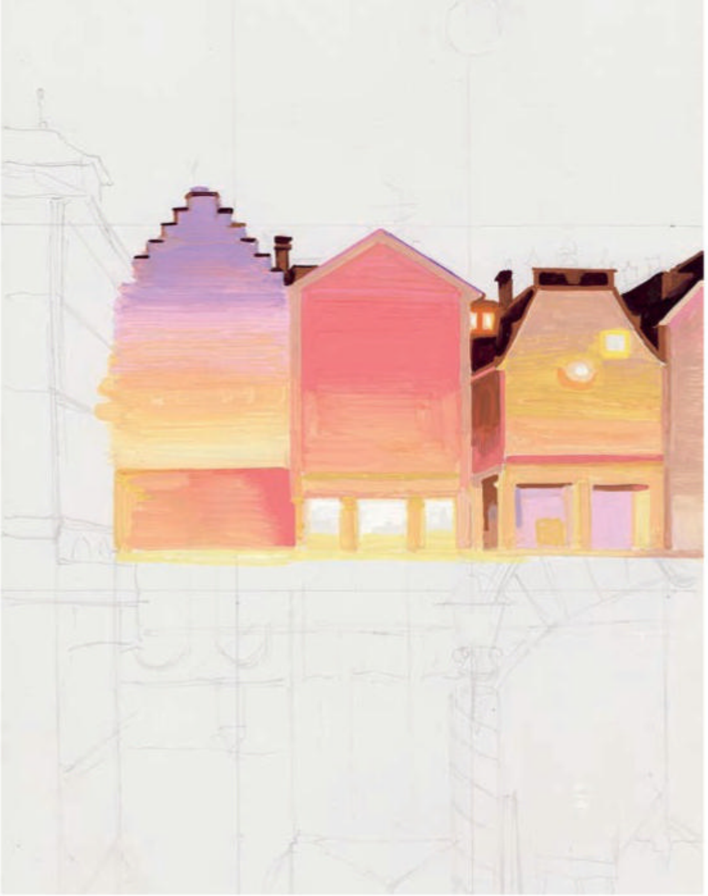
YOU MIGHT HAVE STUMBLED upon drawings made with Posca acrylic paint markers and thought it would be fun to try them out for yourself; at least, that's how I got interested in them. However, despite my initial excitement, I found that they didn't yield the desired results on my mixed-media sketchbook. Consequently, I stowed them away for months until I received blank coated cardstock paper unexpectedly, sparking the idea to give my Posca markers another try. This surface instantly made the drawing experience more enjoyable.

For this demonstration, I'm going to use the markers to paint Zürich at twilight. When I think of the Swiss city, it's not any specific architectural wonder that comes to mind, but rather the enchantment of the Limmat River in the old town area that makes me remember Zürich fondly. The charm of this wonderful city resides in the beautiful historic buildings lining the riverbank, their images perfectly mirrored in the calm waters. After sunset, strolling along the river feels akin to stepping into an illustrated fairy tale. With a crescent moon hanging in the sky, the enchanting houses and their reflections create the perfect composition for an illustration.



1 **BLEND**
For the left-hand building, blend from Lavender into Light Pink, Light Orange and Ivory. Use Light Orange and Coral Pink for the bottom. ▶



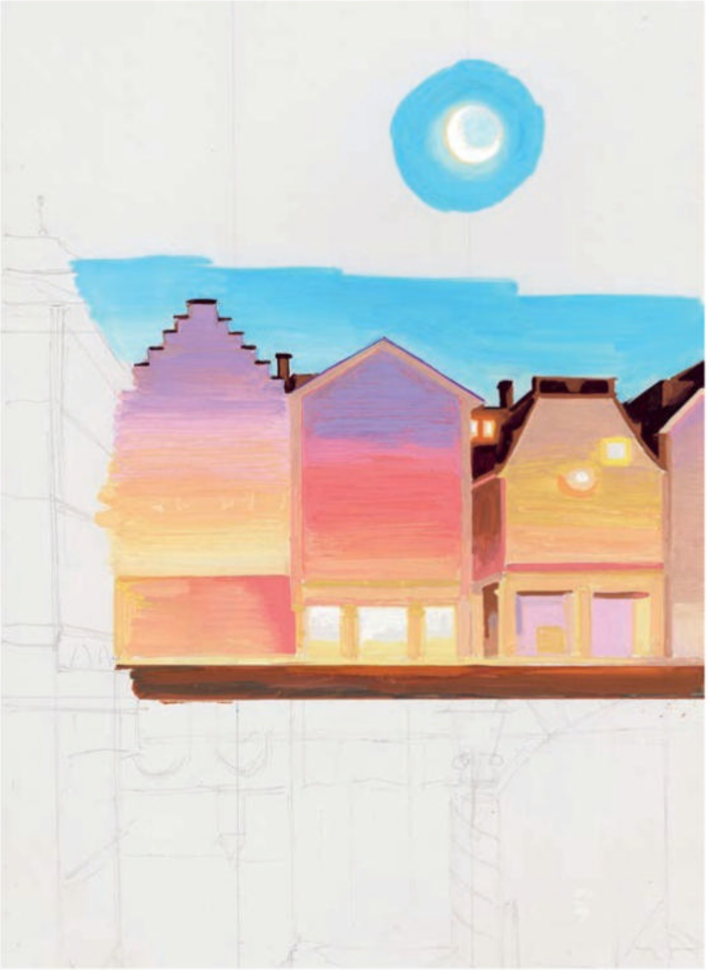


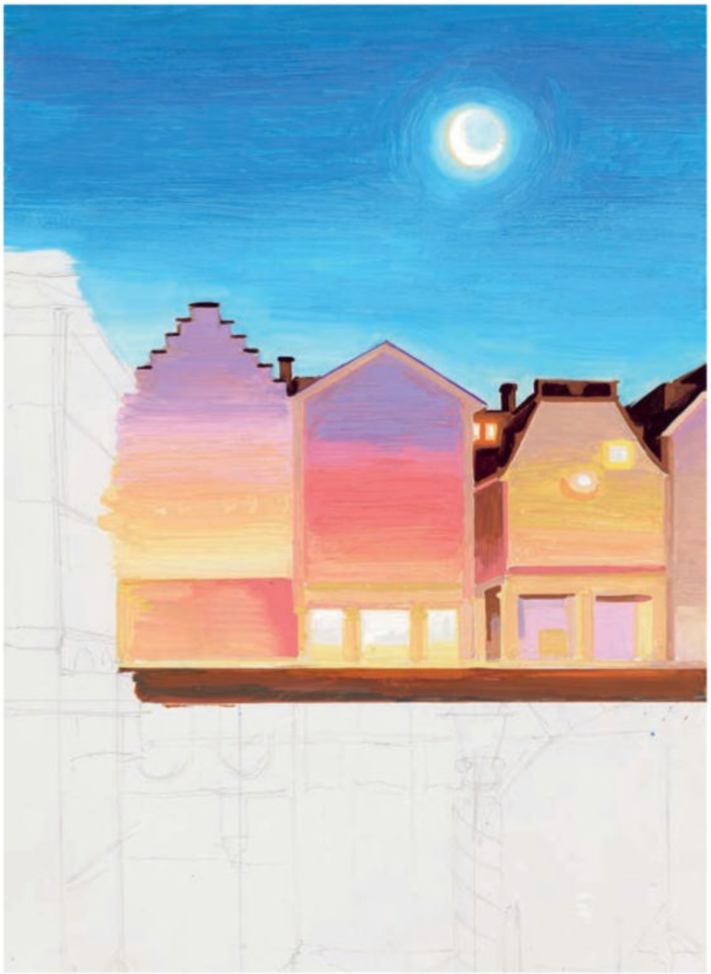
2 BLEND SOME MORE

Fill in the brightly lit area of the middle building with White and Ivory, then overlay Coral Pink, blending into Light Orange on top.

3 THE WALLS AND ROOFS

Use Beige, Apricot and Powder Pastel for the walls, and Dark Brown for the roofs. Add lights with Ivory and White. Use Light Pink for the bottom area in shadow.



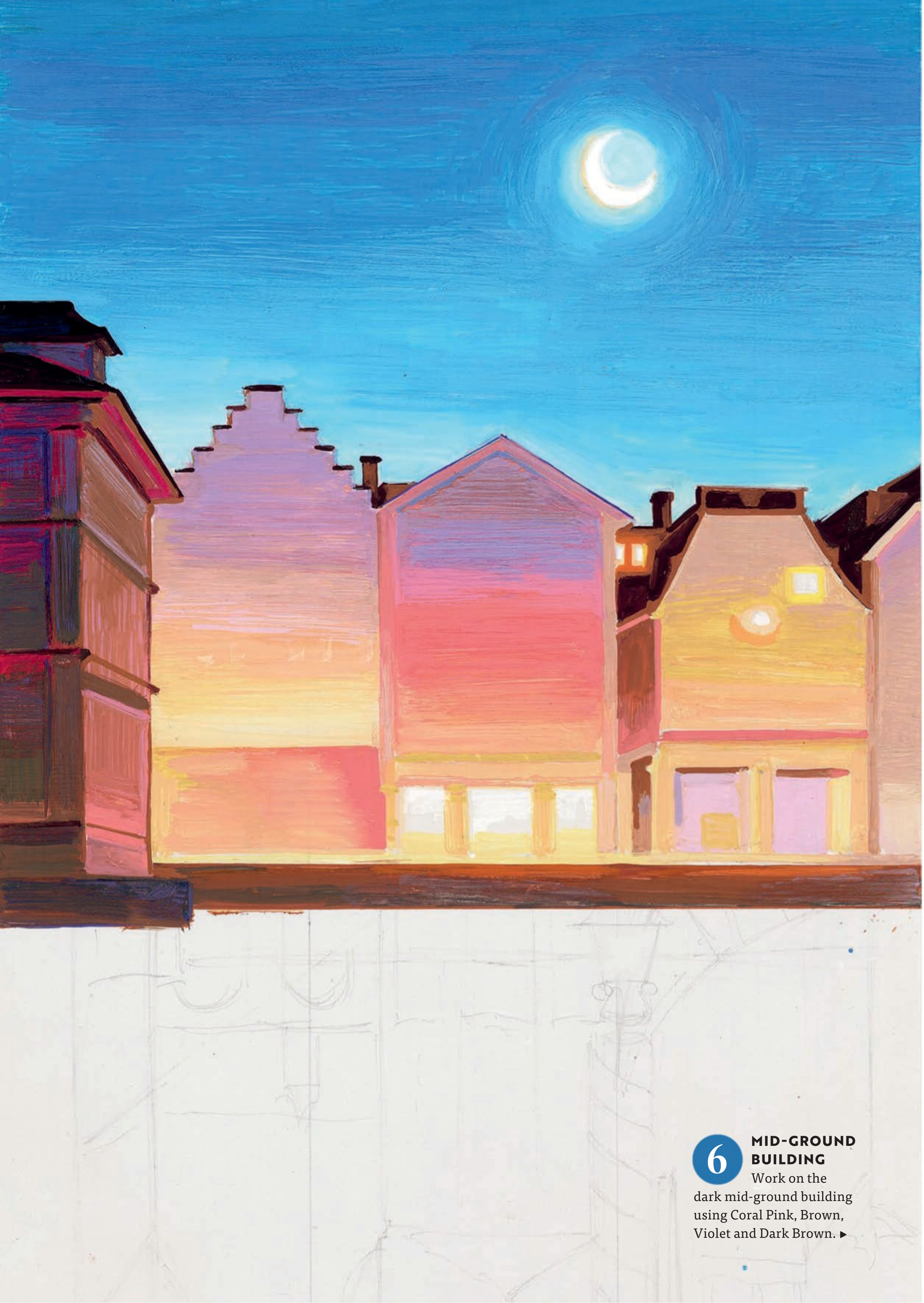


4 THE MOON

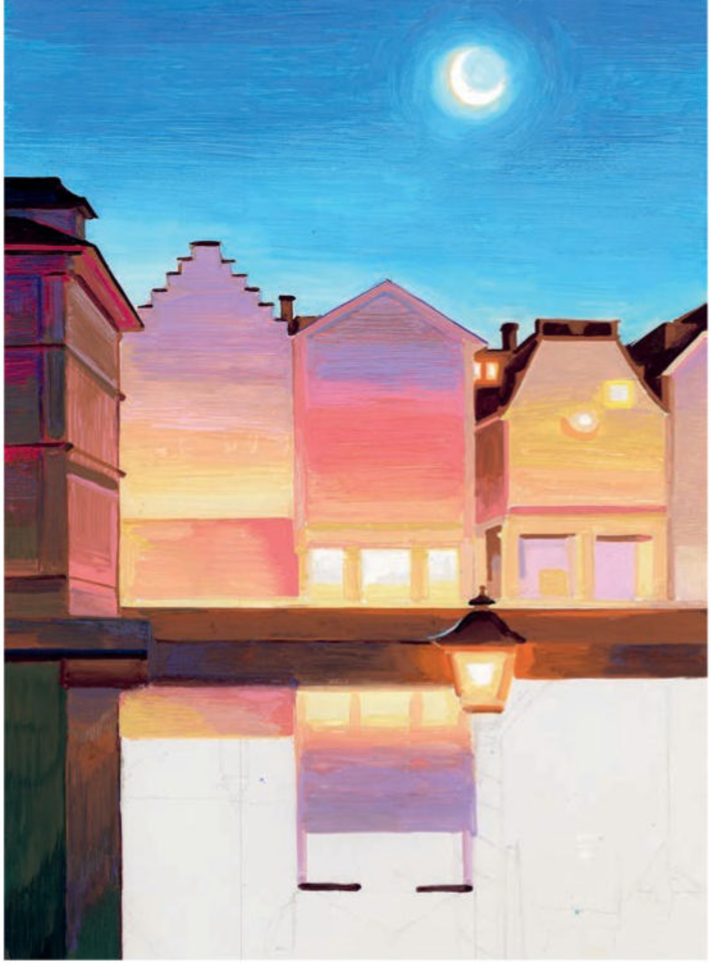
Apply White near the buildings and the moon, then blend with a broad bullet-tip Light Blue marker.

5 THE SKY

Add new paint to the existing Light Blue, blending it smoothly into Sky Blue and then Turquoise.

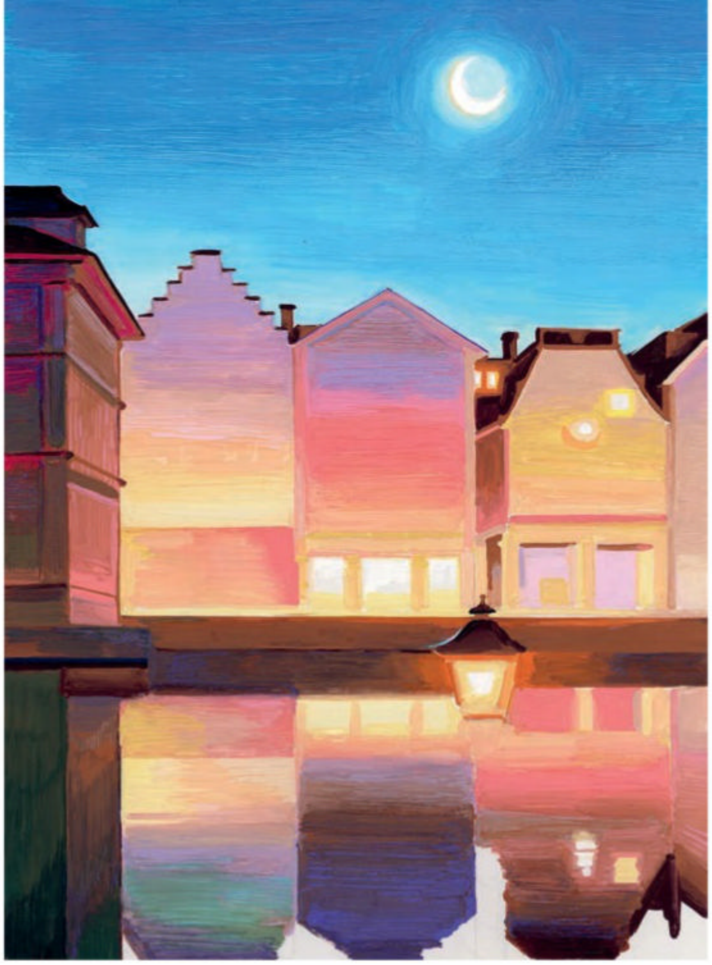


6 **MID-GROUND BUILDING**
Work on the dark mid-ground building using Coral Pink, Brown, Violet and Dark Brown. ▸



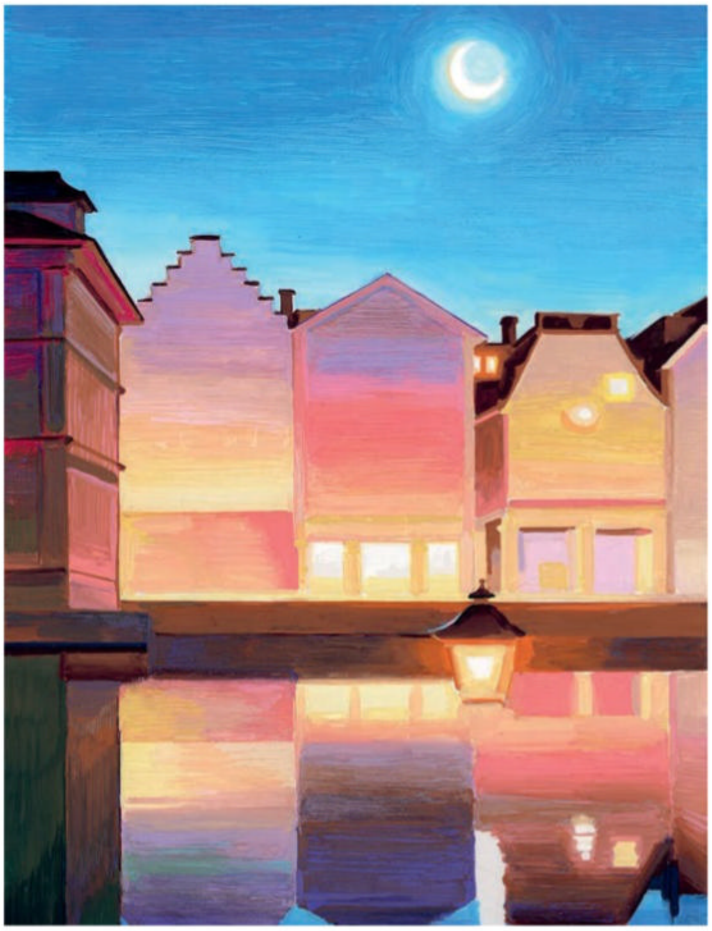
7 THE LAMP AND REFLECTIONS

Draw the lamp with Light Orange, Apricot, Brown and Dark Brown. Draw the reflection in the water using colours based on the corresponding buildings.



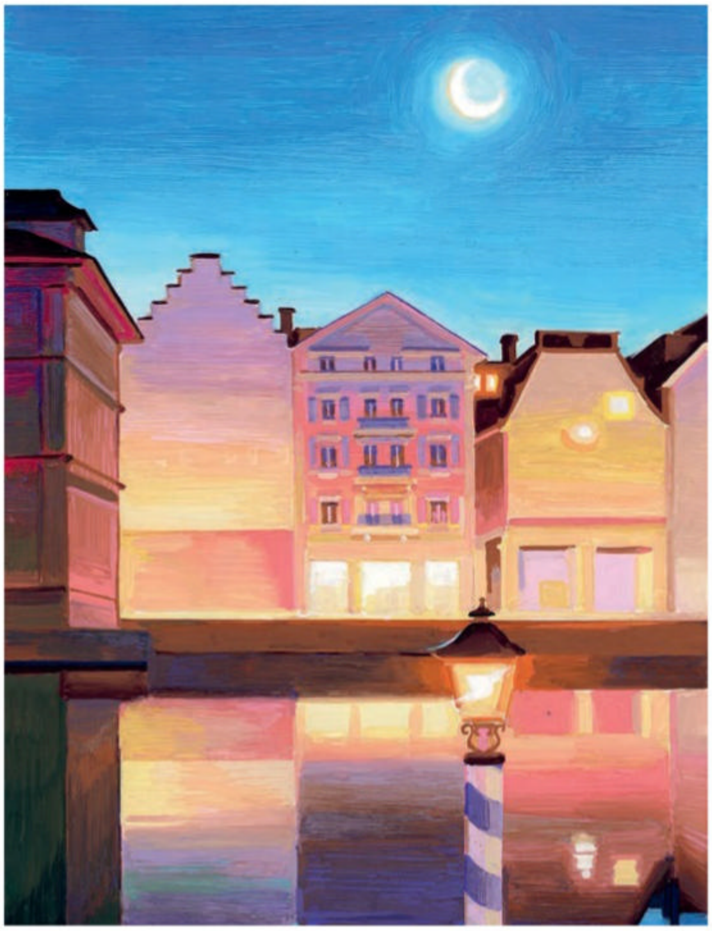
8 MORE REFLECTION WORK

Darken the reflection by blending into Brown, Violet and Dark Brown. Leave the reflection of the lamps as White and Ivory.



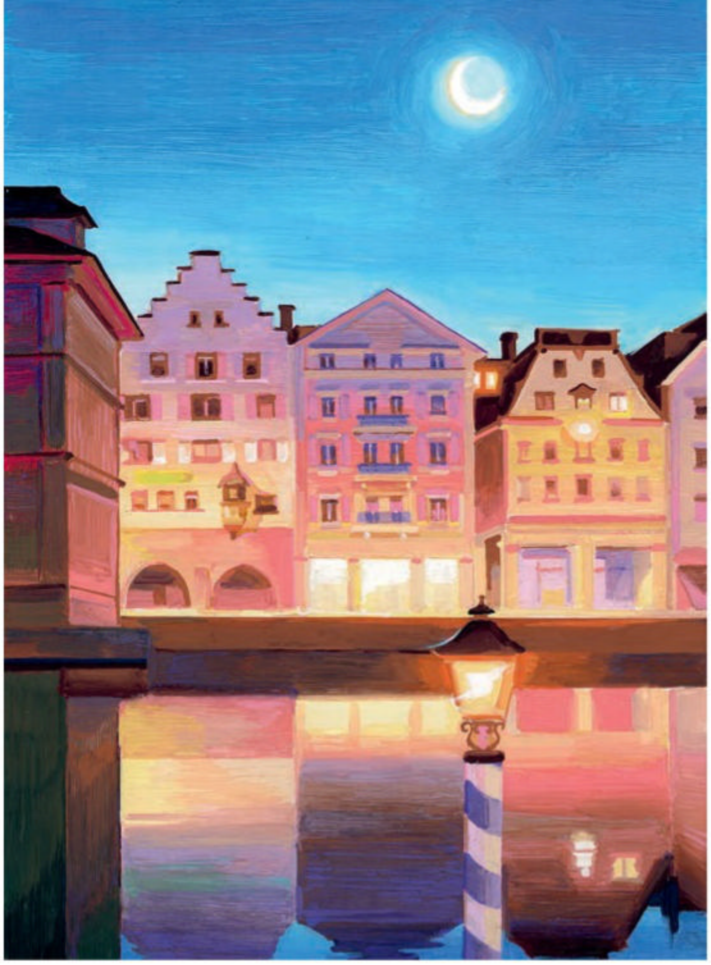
9 THE WATER

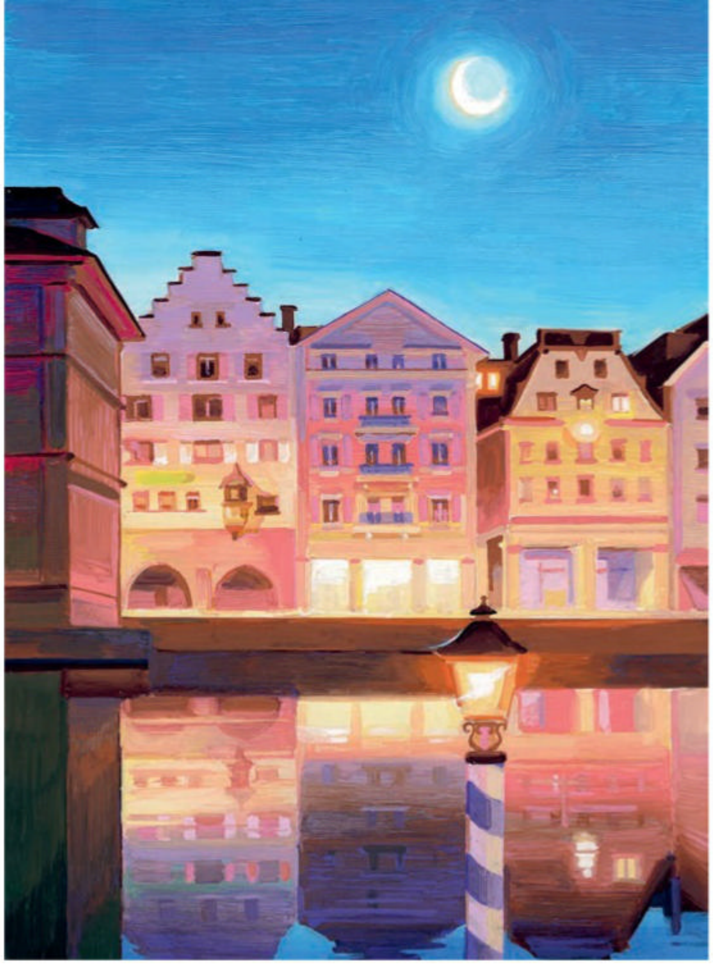
Use Light Blue and Sky Blue to depict the water mirroring the sky. Include streaks to denote water movement.



10 THE LAMP

Add stripes to the lamp post using Powder Pastel, Lavender and Lilac. Use extra-fine-tip Violet, Pink and Light Pink to add window details to the centre building.





11

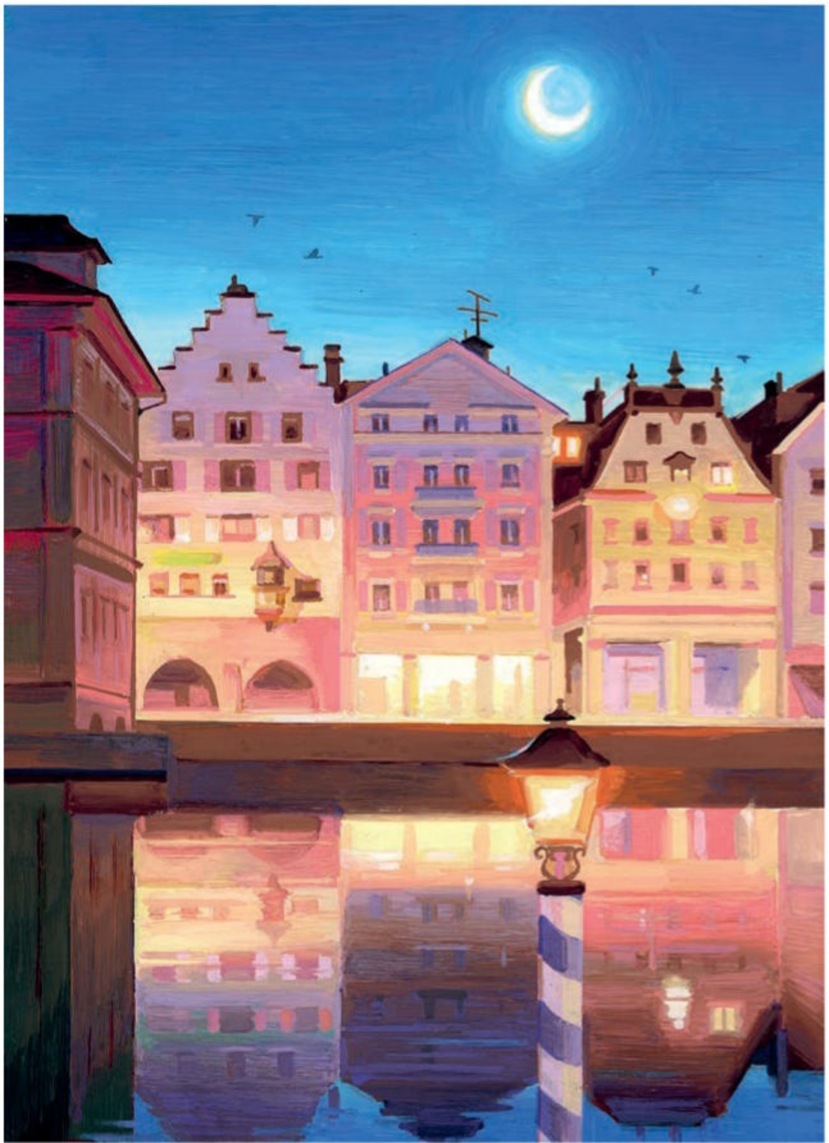
DETAILS

Add details to the left- and right-hand buildings with extra fine-tip White, Light Pink and Brown, and fine-tip Coral Pink, Lavender and Dark Brown.

12

THE EDGES

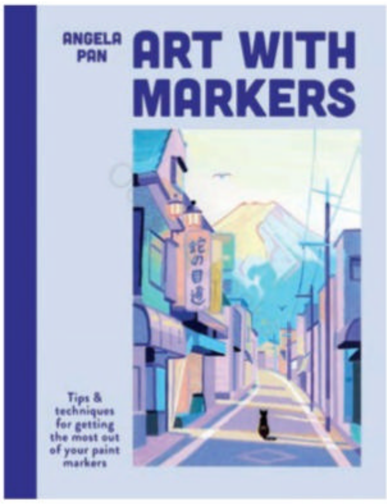
Add window details to the reflection in Brown, Pink and Violet with blurred edges and less contrast.



13

FINISH WITH SMALL DETAILS

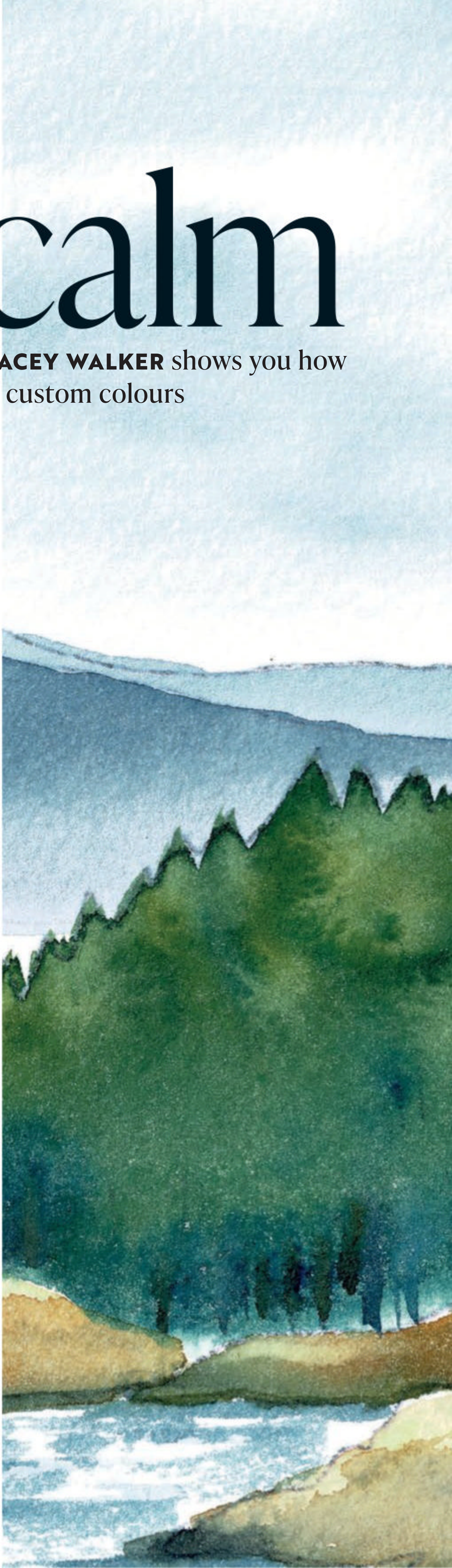
To complete the drawing, add details such as chimneys and antennas to the buildings and add small birds flying sideways to make the scene more lively.


ANGELA PAN
ART WITH MARKERS
Tips & techniques for getting the most out of your paint markers

Art With Markers is available now from all good book retailers. Ilex Press, £18.99 ◻

Coastal calm

In an extract from her new book *Learn to Watercolor*, **LACEY WALKER** shows you how to create this calming coastal scene using custom colours



LACEY'S MATERIALS

Watercolour paints
Burnt Sienna, Payne's Grey, Permanent Yellow, Deep Prussian, Blue Vermilion

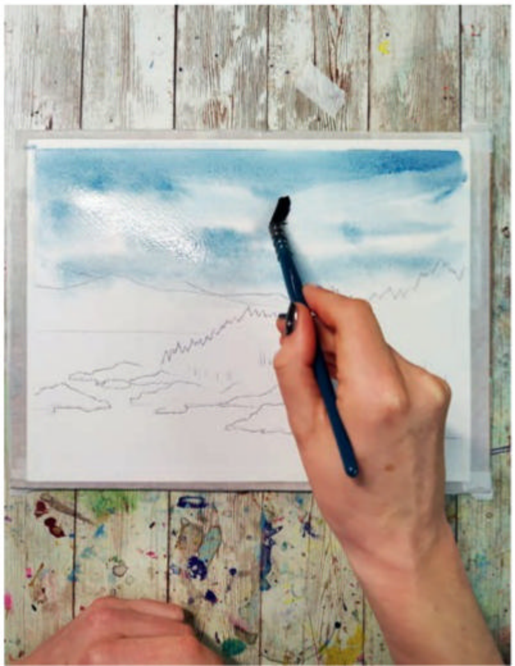
Colour Mixing
Foggy Day Blue: 85% Prussian Blue and 15% Vermilion at a 50% saturation foggier blue
Foggier Blue: Foggy Day Blue plus 20% Payne's Grey, 40% Prussian Blue, 20% Permanent Yellow Deep, and 20% Burnt Sienna at 80% saturation
Ocean Water: Foggy Day Blue at 70% saturation instead of 50%
Forest Green: 40% Prussian Blue, 40% Permanent Yellow Deep, and 20% Burnt Sienna
Sandstone Brown: 80% Burnt Sienna and 20% Prussian Blue at 30% saturation

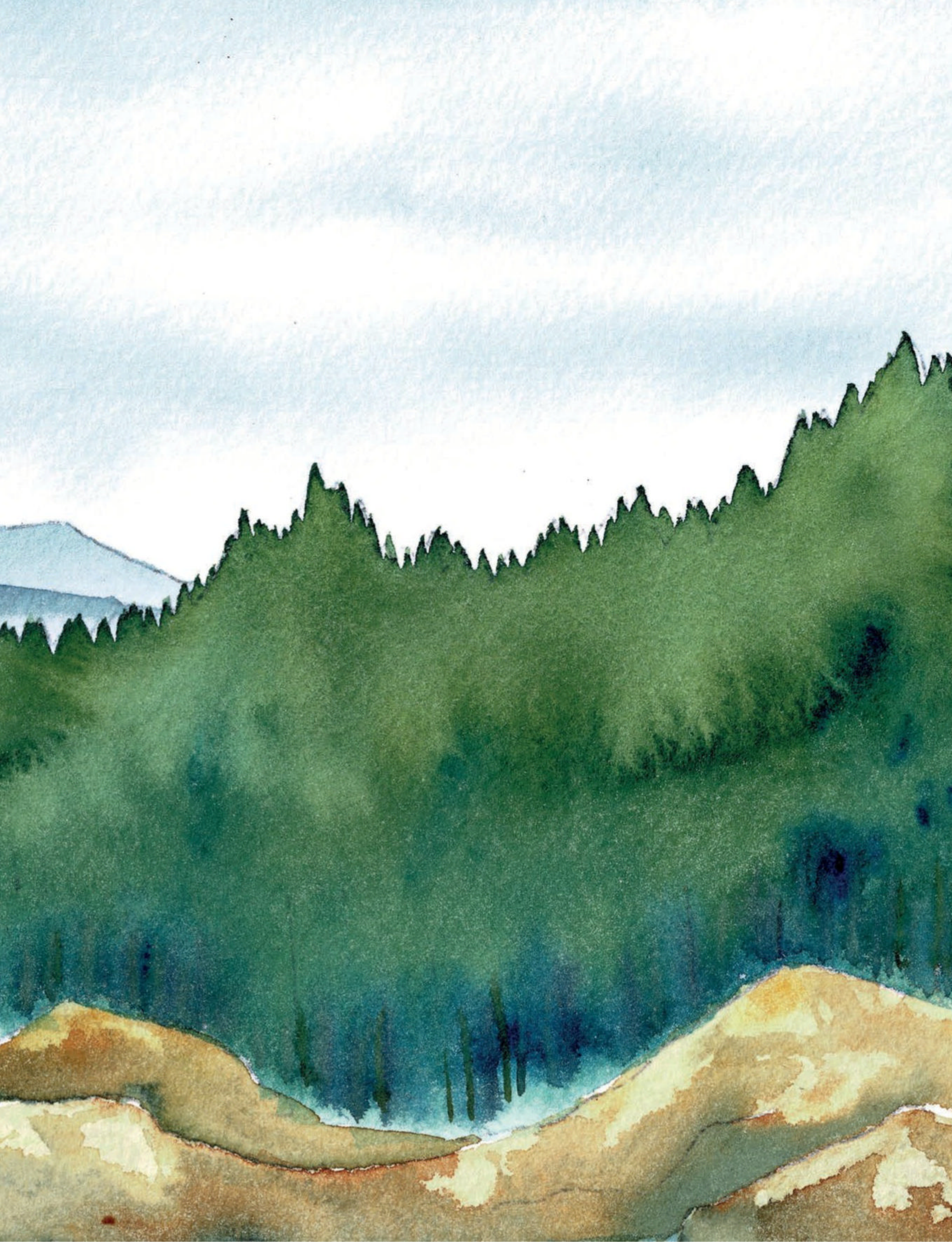
Support
Size 3 quill brush or size 12 round brush
2-inch (5 cm) flat wash brush
Paper towel

MANY OF MY PAINTINGS are taken directly from my experiences and photos, but this one is from my imagination and is an experience I am trying to make a reality. There's a beach in Oregon called Agate Beach where you can walk along and pick up agates. This painting encapsulates the feeling I hope to have while moseying along the beach and looking for treasures surrounded by the sounds of the ocean and the scent of forest. Someday soon I'll be there. There is a lot going on in this painting, but have no fear – remember that nature looks, well, natural, so your painting doesn't have to match mine exactly.

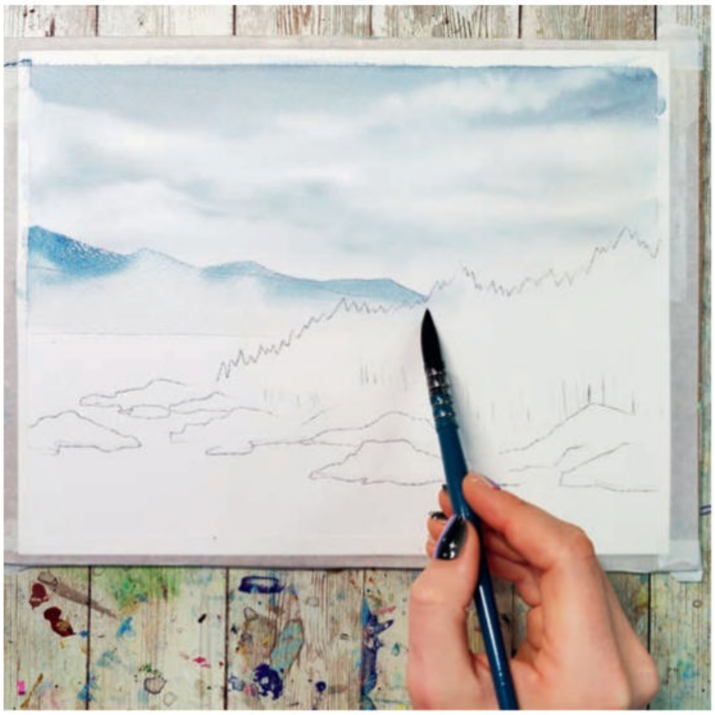
1 BE GENEROUS WITH YOUR PAINT

Mix all the custom colours except for the custom Foggier Blue. Make sure you mix quite a bit of these colours; it's always better to have too much than too little. Using the flat wash brush, wet the top half of the paper to the bottom of the distant mountains. Fill your brush with a generous amount of the custom Foggy Day Blue and place it randomly in the sky, getting a bit more sparing as you get closer to the top of the forest and mountains. The placement doesn't have to make a ton of sense, we just want some variation. Then dry your brush and lift out some areas. You want to keep these soft. ▶





STEP-BY-STEP



2

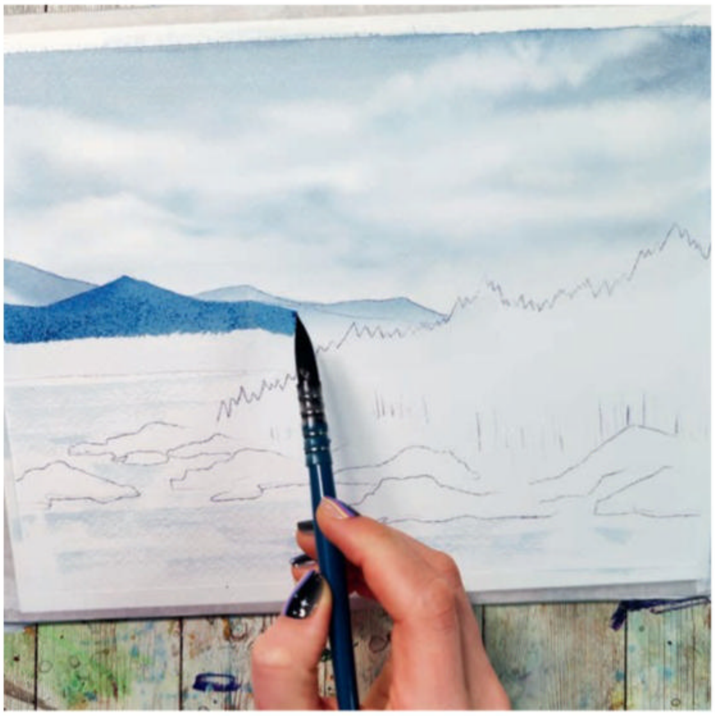
SOFTEN THE COLOUR

Fill your brush with the same custom Foggy Day Blue and place it along the top of the back layer of mountains; then wash your brush and soften that colour down and into the trees with clean water. This doesn't need to be perfect as the colours we'll be adding later are darker, but we want to avoid super harsh edges.

3

DRY BRUSHING

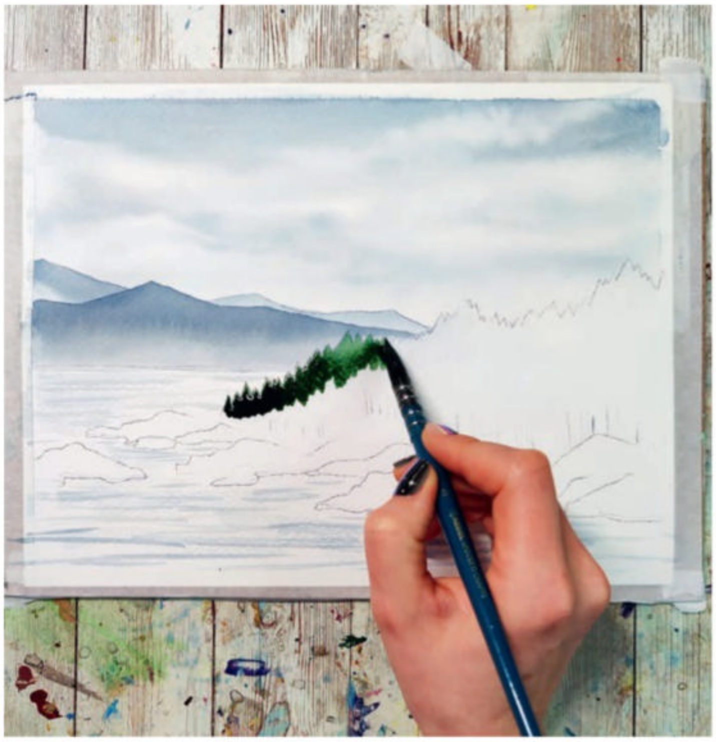
Next, we're going to be using some dry brushing on the ocean section, so fill your brush with Foggy Day Blue but then tap it lightly and repeatedly on a paper towel until when you tap barely anything comes off. Your brush will still have some colour in it, but not enough to soak the paper. Touch the side of the brush very lightly to the page where the ocean is and drag it lightly along, allowing the bristles to skip across the page. The dry brushing technique creates texture with some white showing through, like little ripples. Repeat this a few times with different dry brushing strokes of different lengths, working in the ocean water and avoiding touching the rocks.



4

THE HORIZON LINE

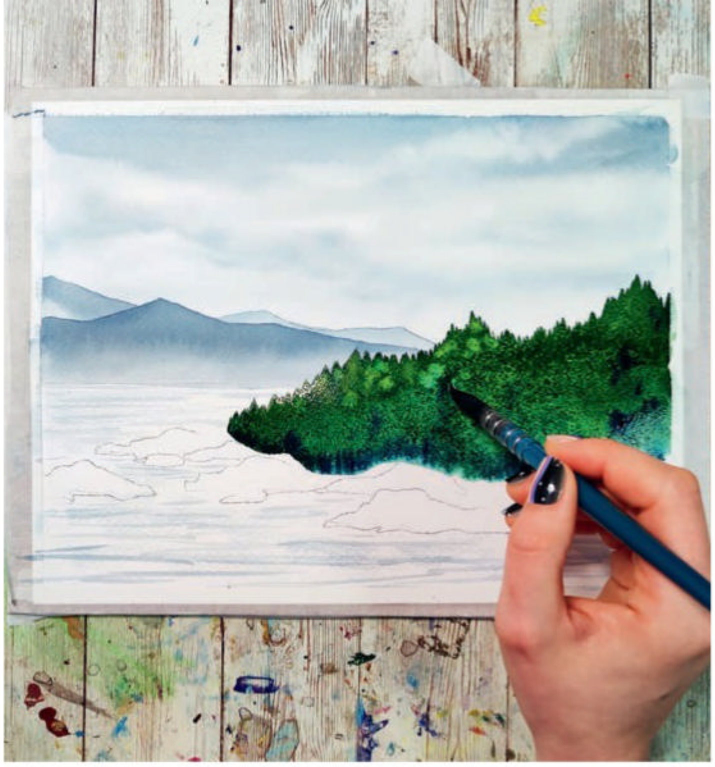
Take whatever is left of your custom Foggy Blue Colour and add a little Payne's Grey to make a Foggier Blue colour. Add this to the second layer of the mountains to about halfway down. Then wash your brush and soften to the horizon line into the trees to soften out that colour so no harsh lines occur. Take this same colour at the tip of your brush and add more horizontal lines sporadically around the water. Don't worry about making these perfect. This is just the texture of the water so if yours are thicker or more squiggly, it's just a rougher day at sea.



5

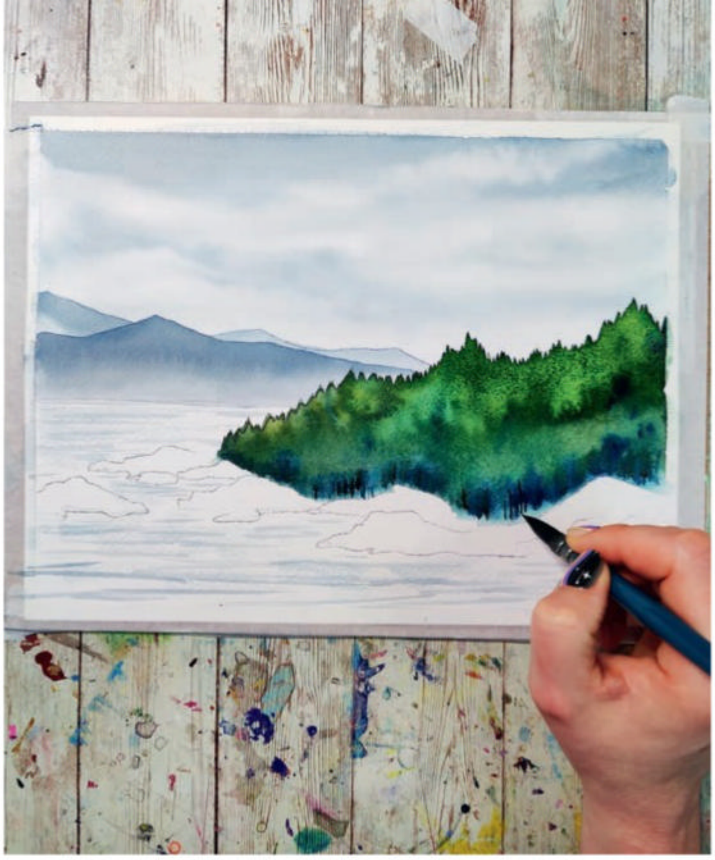
KEEP IT WET

Fill your brush with a generous amount of the custom Forest Green. Use up and downward strokes, taking advantage of the tip of the brush at the top to fill in the forest area. Refill your brush as needed – you want to make sure this stays nice and wet, so err on the side of too much colour and water on the page. Observe your paper to see how wet it is. The top of the forest can remain fairly wet, but near the bottom, it should be approaching the damp stage.



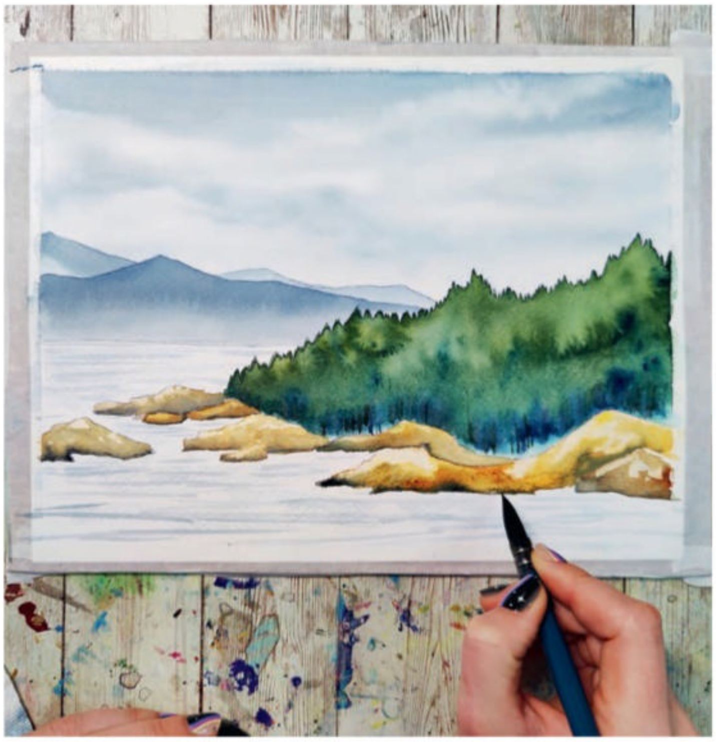
6 THE FOREST AREA

Once you have filled in most of the forest area, fill your brush with water and wash it down to the bottom. While it's still wet, wash your brush and fill it with Permanent Yellow Deep and drop this in a couple of spots along the top of the tree line to add the illusion of light. Then while it's still at the gloss or satin stage, wash your brush and fill it with Prussian Blue and drop this in randomly within the trees. Then concentrate it at the bottom by making up and downward strokes. These will bleed together a bit, but it alludes to the vertical nature of trunks and captures the forest shadow.



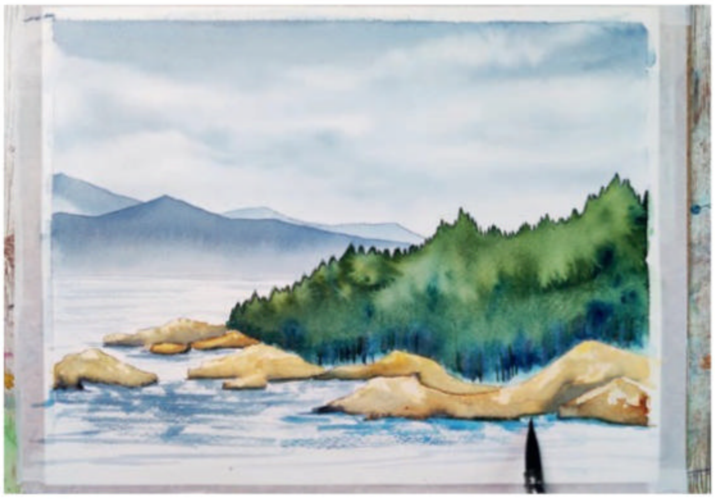
7 CREATE TEXTURE

While things are still wet near the top of the forest, wash your brush and fill it with water. Drop some of this water near the top to create blooms where the water pushes the pigment away from areas and creates an interesting texture. Err on the side of just a few drops – these blooms might not seem like much at first, but they grow as they dry.



8 THE ROCKS

Start by adding in some of the custom Sandstone Brown mixture along with Burnt Sienna on the majority of the rocks, aiming to keep it a bit lighter on top. Then lift colour from the top using either a brush or a paper towel to show the highlights on the top of the rocks. While the brownish colour on the rock is still wet, fill your brush tip with Payne's Grey and drag it along the bottom edge to create a shadow.



9 GO SLOW TO THE FINISH LINE

The final step will add a little more depth to the ocean and shadow from the rocks. Fill your brush with the remaining custom Foggier Blue and tap it off a bit on your paper towel so that you can do the dry brushing technique. Start by lining the border between the bottom of the rocks and the ocean with the tip of your brush. Then lay the side of the brush on the page and swipe it from side to side so that the dry brushing texture is achieved. The key to the texture of the water is to stop while you still have some white space peeking through. It's easy to overdo this part, so go slow and observe frequently.

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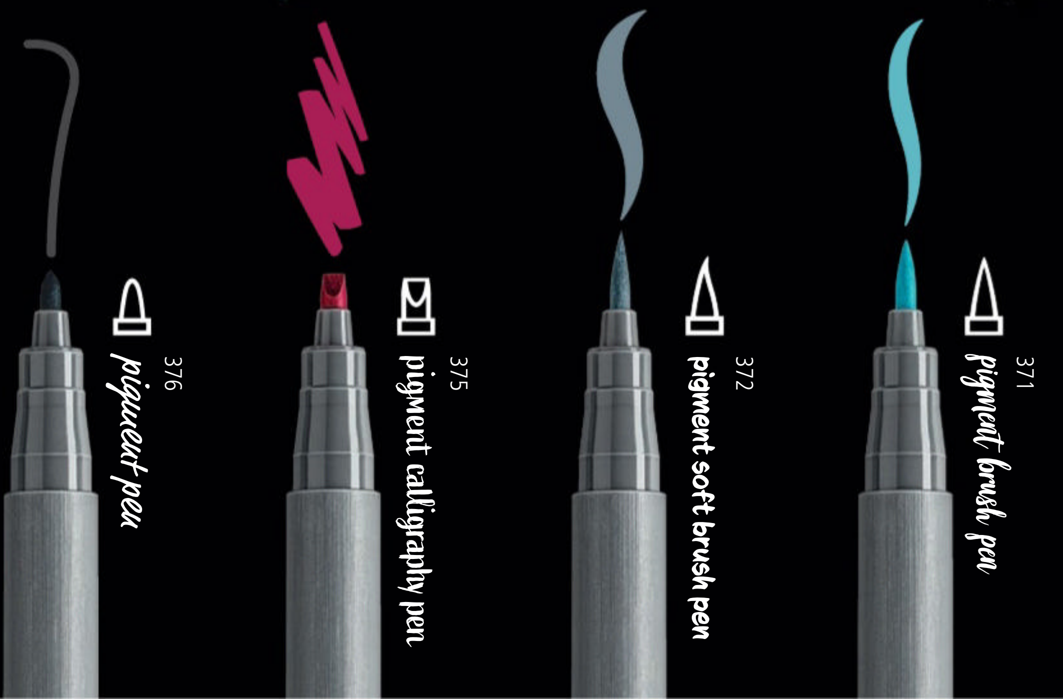
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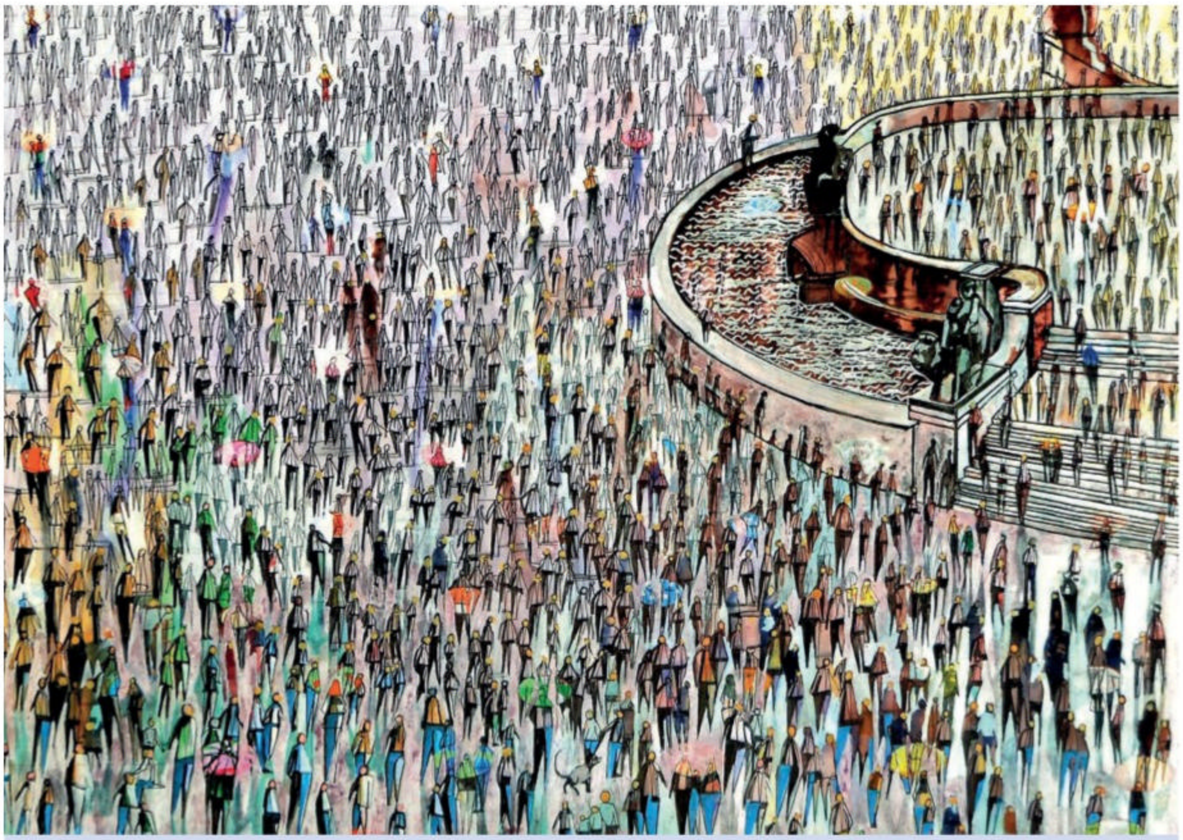


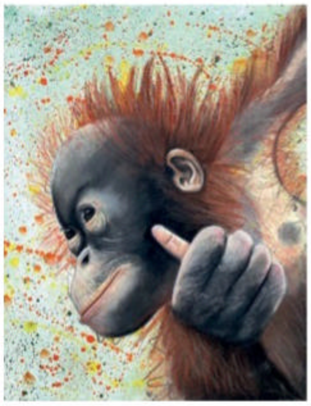
MESSAGE OF THE MONTH

David Douglas

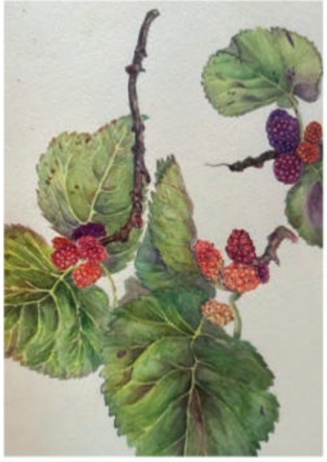
It was great to see the step-by-step cityscape article by Max Panks on your website. I am a member of the British Art Club so visit the site regularly. The carefree fresh watercolours were inspiring, given the detail and possible pitfalls of this subject. I want to show my cityscape which is a different handling of the subject. However, this is a watercolour.

Anne Bardsley

Over the years, I've carefully considered what art means to me, and why I have the urge to create. For me, art is about connection, it's confirmation that we aren't alone. Art is about chasing a feeling and seeing if someone else feels it too. My work focuses on endangered and vulnerable animals, I take my own reference photos to work from and sometimes, I'm able to capture some truly beautiful moments, like my Orangutan painting. With my work, I aim to record a moment in time, and when it's done, I search for someone to share that moment with. I view my need to create as very freeing; I'm simply observing and recording my way through life, and connecting with people along the way.



Sophia Halberstam



My granny and I are subscribers to your wonderful magazine. She is a still life painter (fruits, vegetables and flowers) who was trained by Emily Fern in South Africa and has been painting her whole life (she is 88 years old). She has painted over 2000 paintings. A few years ago, she got an aneurysm which means that she can only see out of one eye. She still paints every day and is an inspiration.

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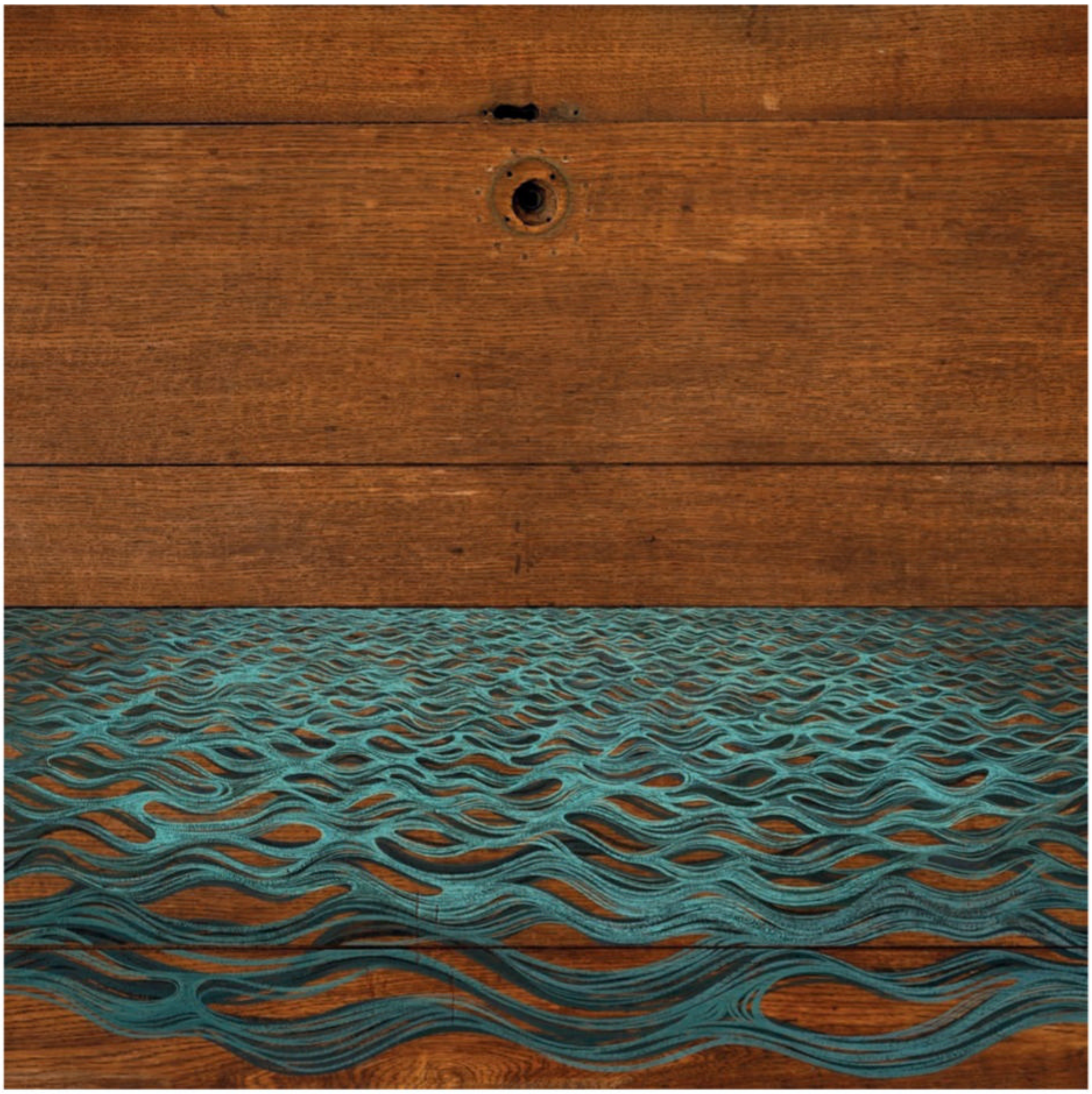

September 2020–April 2024, Norfolk, gouache on 18th century solid oak plank door, 77x196x4cm

Picture this

Every month, we ask an artist to tell us about a painting that is special to them. This month, we speak to artist and curator **DAVID CASS**

There are certain objects which have become synonymous within my practice; objects which I use as surfaces for painting onto. I was immediately drawn to this oak door, principally because of the story its face told: the ghost traces of large ornate strap-hinges and holes where once handle and lock turned; a radius of screw holes which seem to form the rays of a sun.

This door must be 250 years old. How many families lived behind it? What events did it stoically endure? How many hundreds of thousands of times was it opened, closed, locked, knocked, slammed? Doors are familiar, essential items, and each conjures a story and bears witness to the life it's led.

In around 2018, I realised I was almost exclusively making artwork about the sea. I wasn't living near the sea at the time, but I was continually preoccupied with water. In 2014, I lived in the Almería arid zone for a short time and experienced what it was like to go about daily life with a serious shortage of water. Then, the following year, in 2015, I spent time in Venice and witnessed the opposite extreme. Both experiences had an impact on me, led to exhibitions and contributed to a strong and long-lasting desire to use my art practice as a means to explore environmental issues related to water.

My work aims to celebrate the sea, whilst posing serious questions about its current vulnerability. I hope that this painting might open a dialogue, triggering contemplation on the importance of our oceans. I also hope that a viewer might sense the time this painting took and the dedication it demanded.

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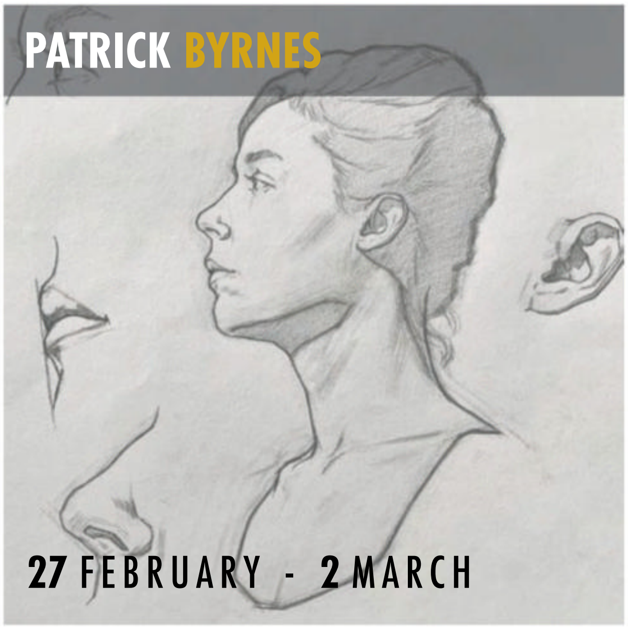

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